

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



127 210

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

INDEPENDENT
IRAQ

*A Study in Iraqi Politics
since 1932*

The Royal Institute of International Affairs is an un-official and non-political body, founded in 1920 to encourage and facilitate the scientific study of international questions. The Institute, as such, is precluded by the terms of its Royal Charter from expressing an opinion on any aspect of international affairs. Any opinions expressed in this publication are not, therefore, those of the Institute.

INDEPENDENT IRAQ

*A Study in Iraqi Politics
since 1932*

BY

MAJID KHADDURI

*Issued under the auspices of the
Royal Institute of International Affairs*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
1951

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C. 4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON

BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS CAPE TOWN

Geoffrey Cumberlege, Publisher to the University

To My Wife

MAJDIA

'Quiconque écrit l'histoire de son temps doit s'attendre qu'on lui reprochera tout ce qu'il a dit et tout ce qu'il n'a pas dit; mais ces petits dégoûts ne doivent point décourager un homme qui aime la vérité et la liberté, qui n'attend rien, ne craint rien, et ne demande rien, et qui borne son ambition à cultiver les lettres.'

VOLTAIRE À M. BERTIN DU ROCHERET

14 April 1732

PREFACE

THE establishment of the mandates system by the Peace Treaties of 1919 provided a novelty in the administration of dependent countries, and has, therefore, attracted many writers to study the theory and practice of this system. Iraq, owing both to her special status as a former mandated country in treaty relations with Great Britain and to the conciliatory policy of that Power, has been of especial interest. What has rendered the task relatively easy here is the voluminous documentary material which both Great Britain and the League of Nations annually published on the progress achieved under the mandate. Further, a number of British officers and administrators who served in Iraq during the mandate recorded their experiences and observations, and their accounts have proved to be most valuable.

The termination of the Iraq Mandate in 1932, which was so significant a landmark in the political development of that country, unfortunately marked the beginning of a decline in the flow of documentary material and books on the development of this new State. This lack of documentary material has made it exceedingly difficult to write the history of Iraq after 1932. Adequate studies on certain Iraqi problems, it is true, have been made by such writers as Colonel Stafford and Lady Drower; but no comprehensive treatises such as Ireland's *Iraq: A Study in Political Development* and Foster's *Making of Modern Iraq* have yet been prepared.

This book has been written to continue the story of Iraq's political development since 1932. I have had access to published as well as unpublished documents; and, as a subject of Iraq who had just entered public life when his country won her independence in 1932, I have had the opportunity of making the acquaintance and sometimes winning the friendship, of a number of public men and politicians who took a leading part in the public affairs of Iraq after that date.

I have, however, been under no illusion that these persons, sincere as they were, have not often given me *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* explanations of events. I have, therefore, examined their utterances critically, taking into account the background of each person concerned. I have given the sources of oral reports throughout, and wish now to acknowledge the kindness and the ready assistance given

so frequently been assisted by valuable commen
the whole of the book. I should like to acknowledg
Quincy Wright, Sheeth Nu'man, Edward H. I
'd, Robert D. Sethian, Abd ar-Razzaq al-Hasa
Tourani; I also wish to thank Sir Edwin Drower,
he Iraqi Ministry of Justice, and Herman Finer f
on the sections dealing with the Constitution of I
ents. I likewise wish to acknowledge the most v
made by Mr C. J. Edmonds, former adviser to th
'the Interior, Sir Reader Bullard, formerly His M

CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
I INTRODUCTION	1
II THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT	10
III TRIAL AND ERROR IN SELF-GOVERNMENT I. (1932-6)	36
IV TRIAL AND ERROR IN SELF-GOVERNMENT II. (1932-6)	54
V THE FIRST MILITARY COUP D'ÉTAT, 1936	71
VI THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT (1936-7)	95
VII FURTHER COUPS D'ÉTAT. I. (1937-41)	127
VIII FURTHER COUPS D'ÉTAT. II. (1937-41)	153
IX THE CLIMAX: APRIL-MAY 1941	182
X CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	206
XI FOREIGN POLICY	223
XII EPILOGUE	264
APPENDIXES	
I THE HASHIMI FAMILY	277
II THE IRAQI CABINETS	278
III GENERAL NURI'S MEMORANDUM OF 15 DECEMBER 1940	281
INDEX	287
MAP: IRAQ AND HER NEIGHBOURS	<i>at end</i>

INTRODUCTION

ON 3 October 1932, by the vote of fifty-two States-members, Iraq was admitted to membership of the League of Nations as an independent country. The League's decision, one of the most peaceful in its history, was coupled with a resolution to terminate the mandate, and thus Iraq was immediately raised from dependency to full-fledged international status.

In welcoming the admission of Iraq to the League, M. Politis, President of the Assembly, declared with great satisfaction that the event

bears witness to the League's capacity to achieve pacific successes . . . which, without the League . . . would probably never have taken place save by violence. The League thus . . . shows that, by the very action of its rules, it does in fact afford an opportunity of attaining by evolution what otherwise could in most cases only be attained by revolution.¹

M. Yevtitch, accredited representative of Yugoslavia, declared that, as rapporteur of the committee on admission, he had great pleasure in commending the admission of Iraq to the League. 'It is a pure coincidence', M. Yevtitch went on to say, 'that it should fall to the representative of a country whose whole history has been one long and bitter struggle for liberty to contribute its modest quota to the task of admitting the Kingdom of Iraq to the League of Nations.'² M. Yevtitch might have added that both Iraq and his country had been once but two sequestered provinces on the opposite sides of an empire that extended from the Adriatic to the Persian Gulf, and that before their final liberation they had long languished under the tyranny of Ottoman administration. Serbia was fortunate enough to obtain her full freedom at the Congress of Berlin (1878); but when Iraq was formally detached from Turkey at Lausanne (1923), her independence was only 'provisionally' recognized by the Allied Powers, subject to mandatory tutelage until 1932, when her full freedom was finally achieved. It was indeed more significant than mere 'coincidence',

¹ League of Nations, *Official Journal: Records of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly* (Special Supplement no. 104; Geneva, 1932) p. 49.

² *ibid.* p. 47.

as M. Yevtitch had declared, that the duty of commanding a former Ottoman province to League membership should devolve upon Yugoslavia, another former Ottoman province.

The process of achieving full independence by other former Ottoman provinces was yet to continue. When the Second World War broke out, the League of Nations could claim among its members, apart from the Balkans, four former Ottoman provinces in Asia and Africa. There are now eight in the United Nations organization. This process, whether regretted as the dissolution of a great empire or hailed as the progressive evolution of the Middle East, is an important phenomenon in the history of the whole East. Its accomplishment was significantly noted by none other than Rüştü Aras, representative of the mother country, who presided over the special meeting of the League Assembly on 26 May 1937, and welcomed the admission of Egypt as having 'completed the successive stages of a progress of evolution as peaceful as it is glorious'.¹

THE IRAQI NATIONAL MOVEMENT AS PART OF THE ARAB MOVEMENT

The winning of Iraq's independence, which seemed to the outside world in 1932 to be merely a happy combination of favourable circumstances—Britain's satisfaction with the Iraq Treaty, the attempt of the Great Powers to demonstrate the possibility of change through peaceful means, and the League's desire to increase its membership—was in fact the culmination of protracted negotiations between Iraq and Great Britain; and this was only one act in a larger movement of the challenge of Arab nationalism to European imperialism.

The Arab nationalist movement is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Arab world. From the opening of the sixteenth century, when the Arab countries fell under the domination of the Turks, to the end of the nineteenth, the Arabs remained loyal subjects of the Ottoman Sultan. During the Hamidian period (1876–1909) pious Arabs found spiritual comfort in the autocratic shadow of a caliph who claimed to govern them after the fashion of the early Muslim caliphs. When, however, the Western idea of nationalism triumphed in the Balkans, it captured the imagination of other subject races of the empire. Nationalism, it is contended, may easily develop as a result of propaganda and bad administration; and this was nowhere more true than under Ottoman rule.

¹ *Monthly Summary of the League of Nations*, vol. 17, no. 5 (May 1937) p. 91.

When the Young Turks seized power in 1908, enlightened Arabs, as other non-Turkish elements of the empire, were attracted by their policy which sought to transform Turkey into a modern constitutional State. But the Young Turks, who proved to be more nationalistic and less liberal than they professed, embarked upon a policy of Turkification which aimed at transforming all the racial elements of the empire into Turks. This led to an open rupture between Arabs and Turks. Until now the Arab nationalists, afraid of disrupting Islamic unity, had demanded an autonomous status under the Sultan; but the negative attitude of the Young Turks pushed the Arab nationalists to the more extreme demands which culminated in the revolt of 1916.

The fathers of the Arab nationalist movement, important as they were, are too numerous to be mentioned here; when, however, the First World War broke out, leadership devolved upon Sharif Husayn of Hijaz. All of Husayn's sons played an important role in the prosecution of the Arab Revolt, but the one who played the most significant part was Husayn's third son, Faysal. Whether as a soldier in the desert, or as a national leader in Syria and Iraq, his ultimate aim was to espouse the general Arab cause.

Born fifteen years before the end of the nineteenth century, Faysal was destined to witness the shifting fortunes of the Ottoman empire since the Hamidian period. He was brought up as a loyal subject of Sultan Abd al-Hamid, who ruled the empire as Caliph of all the Muslims and commanded the allegiance of pious Turks and Arabs. Thus Sharif Husayn, Faysal's father, with other notables of Mecca, could hardly question the sacred authority of their Padishah. In 1893 Sharif Husayn was invited to Constantinople, and remained there as the exiled guest of the Sultan for fifteen years. His sons, who received their education in the Ottoman capital, witnessed the rise of nationalism which eventually disrupted the Sultan's empire. During the decade in which the nascent Arab nationalist movement crystallized into a well-defined movement, Faysal emerged as the most promising Arab leader of those who distinguished themselves both in war and peace.

The story of Faysal as the chief champion of the Arab cause opens with the arresting picture of his dramatic capture of Damascus in 1918. Until then, as one of the military commanders, he was merely carrying out the orders of his father, with the help of General Allenby and the advice of T. E. Lawrence, in order to bring the holy war against the Turks to a successful conclusion. After his entry into

Damascus, Faysal became the chosen leader of the Syrian nationalists who sought the restoration of the Umayyad capital as it had been in the glorious Arab past.

The young desert leader, who had just concluded his military career upon the cessation of hostilities with Turkey, was sent to Paris to represent his father at the Peace Conference and to plead for Syria's aspirations to independence. As a soldier who attained conclusive victories on the battlefield, Faysal, perhaps, expected to achieve similar conclusive results at the conference table. He was, however, shocked at the undisguised bargaining for what seemed to him to be unquestionable Arab rights. Though an ally of the victorious Powers, he realized that the Arab world, and more particularly Syria, had become a pawn in the diplomatic game of the Great Powers. He presented the Arab claims for independence before the Council of Ten, but secret arrangements, which reflected the ambitions of the Great Powers in the Arab world, ruined his case.

Faysal returned to Syria with an indelible memory of his brief diplomatic experience at Paris. He was not alarmed, for the soldierly spirit was still alive in him. In a speech which he made after his arrival at Beirut (30 April 1919), he conveyed to his people the result of his diplomatic mission. 'Complete independence', he declared, 'is never given; it is always taken.' His report was not encouraging, but the Syrians caught an echo of the words. Faysal urged his people to unite in order to be able to play their proper part in the determination of their future life. He contended that the fate of Syria, dependent as it was on the Great Powers, should not be determined entirely at their pleasure. This attitude eventually led to a quarrel with France, for neither Faysal nor France was prepared to share authority over Syria. But it was a fight between unequal partners. Within a few hours Faysal's forces were shattered at Maysalun (24 July 1920) and his throne at Damascus was forever lost.

Just as the precarious throne of the Umayyads gave way to the more permanent dynasty of the Abbasids, so Faysal lost his throne at Damascus to find another more promising and less precarious in Baghdad. The British suggested that he should accede to the throne of Iraq, but he would not accept it unless it was offered to him by the Iraqis themselves. Faysal, moreover, was not prepared to accept the new throne under a mandate. Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, promised Faysal that Britain's relations with Iraq would be governed by a Treaty of Alliance. It was thus that Faysal not only

obtained another throne for himself, but also won for Iraq more advantageous terms than Great Britain had been prepared to give without him. Iraq, it is true, had already been promised self-government, but Britain had not yet made up her mind what sort of a government should be set up. It was a happy coincidence that there was an available candidate for a vacant throne. No better choice could have been made. From the British standpoint, Faysal's Arab Government satisfied the angry clamours of the Iraqi nationalists; and for Faysal, Iraq afforded new possibilities of championing the Arab cause.

KING FAYSAL'S POLICY

Faysal's coming to Iraq did not bring that immediate full independence which he and the Iraqis had expected. Churchill's version of the treaty which he had promised Faysal to replace the mandate contained all the substance, though not the form, of that mandate. 'This is not the kind of treaty which Mr Churchill promised me in London', complained Faysal in an hour of despair. But Faysal's bitter experience in Syria had taught him the lesson never to clash with a Great Power in Iraq. He would never again yield to the advice of the extreme nationalists. The negative attitude of the Syrian extremists, he contended, had definitely resulted in a serious national loss. In Iraq Faysal thought it more prudent to accept what Britain was prepared to give, while he continued to press for further concessions under more favourable circumstances. He followed a policy aptly called in Arabic 'take and ask', or, in Western terminology, 'step by step'. This moderate approach to Anglo-Iraqi relations proved not only more advantageous to Iraq, but it also fitted well into the pattern of British colonial policy, which allowed dependencies to develop towards self-government by a slow and peaceful method.

Though hot-tempered and impatient, Faysal took a hopeful view of the treaty and ordered his Ministers to sign it (10 October 1922). But the immediate reactions to the acceptance of the treaty were indeed grave and disastrous. Both Faysal and England fell into disfavour in the eyes of the Iraqi public. England was attacked for having deliberately denied Iraq her rightful independence, and Faysal was denounced as a traitor who had sold his country to save his skin. It took all his persuasive genius to convince the Iraqi public of the sincerity of his efforts and the soundness of his policy.

The treaty of 1922 taught both Faysal and Britain that it could not

be regarded as a basis for a permanent Anglo-Iraqi friendship. The Iraqi nationalists were not prepared to accept any plan short of complete independence and the abrogation of the mandate. The treaty was revised in 1923 by a protocol which shortened its period from twenty years to four; and in 1926 and 1927 it was replaced by other treaties which, though they did not much advance Iraq's status towards full independence, demonstrated that Great Britain was quite prepared to grant Iraq her independence piecemeal.

In 1930 a final compromise was reached. The treaty of 30 June 1930 reconciled Iraq's national aspirations and Great Britain's fundamental interests. It was indeed Faysal's crowning effort, since it achieved for Iraq her much cherished independence but conceded to Britain her essential imperial interests.¹ The treaty was denounced in Iraq by the extremists and in England by the imperialists. Sponsored, however, by General Nuri as-Sa'id, Prime Minister of Iraq, it was finally ratified by Parliament and came into force in 1932.

When Iraq was admitted as a member of the League of Nations, Faysal's name was so deservedly associated with the event that all those accredited representatives who spoke in the League Assembly congratulated him on 'the great work he has successfully accomplished'. General Nuri, Prime Minister of Iraq, endorsed all that had been said about his sovereign and declared that 'the homage which has been rendered to him in this great Assembly is the homage which he deserves'.² Sir John Simon, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, had probably interpreted the real sentiment of His Majesty's Government when he declared in the League Assembly that without Faysal's 'wise and energetic co-operation it would have been impossible, whatever might have been the good will on the side of the Power discharging its mandate, for the young State of Iraq in the space of no more than twelve years to qualify, as it has qualified, to take its place, as it now takes its place with the assent and approval of us all, in the comity of the League of Nations'.³

FAYSAL'S ROLE AS KING AND NATIONAL LEADER

The present writer does not claim that Faysal is to be esteemed without reservation. Nor is it the aim of this work to give a full

¹ For a full discussion of the treaty see Chapter XI.

² League of Nations, *Official Journal: Records of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly* (Special Supplement no. 104; Geneva 1932) p. 49.

³ *ibid.* p. 50.

picture of Faysal's career, but only of such phases of it as affected Iraq after her rise to independence. For the scope of the present study covers a period which begins only a year before Faysal's death. Faysal's role in this period was of prime importance, for he laid down the foundation upon which his successors, according to their lights, built up the present structure. The difference between Iraq today and Faysal's expectations of it is one of the most significant aspects of the recent history of Iraq.

The importance of Faysal's achievements, however, was never fully appreciated by his people until his death. When the news of his sudden and unexpected end reached his people, an inevitable reaction in his favour took place. Iraq suddenly awoke in the midst of a national crisis—the Assyrian affair—to find herself without her staunch national leader. Faysal's death, which was undoubtedly hastened by the Assyrian incident, marked the beginning of unlimited admiration for him in Iraq. He was indeed like many other heroes in history, worshipped only after their death.

Faysal's role in building up the Iraqi State can hardly be exaggerated. He came to the throne of Iraq, it will be remembered, with the help of the British; and, though his accession was approved by a national plebiscite, there were certain sections of the population that either did not want him or were not very enthusiastic for him. But Faysal steadily grew stronger with the years. He built up his own party and gained an increasing popular support for his administration and policy with each new step he attained towards independence. Though a young man, hardly thirty-six years old, Faysal ascended the throne of Iraq with the ripe experience of a decade crowded with events and episodes. His quarrel with the French in Syria taught him a great lesson; and his relations with the British in Iraq proved that he had become an abler diplomat and more far-seeing statesman than either his British or Arab friends had expected.

Faysal's greatest asset was his ability to hold a balance between the British and the Iraqi nationalists. He realized that British help and sympathy were essential both to protect Iraq against hostile neighbours and to bring the mandatory regime to an end. He genuinely believed in the value of British friendship, and contended that British and Iraqi interests were not essentially irreconcilable. It was thus that he was capable both of securing British sympathy for Iraq's national aspirations and of controlling the nationalist elements. He was, it is true, reproached at times for having encouraged the

opposition parties in order to obtain more favourable terms in his treaty negotiations with Britain. But it is also true that he restrained nationalist extremists who were never satisfied with any treaty with Britain short of complete independence. He was indeed a great moderating factor in Anglo-Iraqi relations, and his loss was keenly felt during the crisis of 1941 when the treaty with Britain was put to the test.

Faysal, moreover, was able to win the confidence of the Iraqi nationalists. He gathered around him a number of able men ready to serve their country with devotion. Some of these men, originally from Iraq, had served in the Turkish army and then with him in Hijaz and Syria. When Faysal moved to Baghdad these men, together with a number of Syrian Arabs, moved with him. There was, it is true, a good deal of jealousy felt by other Iraqi politicians who were not originally with Faysal (and some of them, indeed, did not desert the Turks until the collapse of Turkey), who formed an opposition. But Faysal's personality and leadership soon dominated all those around him and he was respected, though not loved, by all. 'No-one could look at the Emir Feisal', Robert Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States, keenly observed, 'without the instinctive feeling that there was a man whom nature had chosen to be a leader of men, a man who was worthy to be a leader of men.'¹

Nor was Faysal capable only of controlling the townsmen. In a country like Iraq, where the tribal population had given much trouble to the Ottoman and British administrations in the past, the need for someone who could mediate between the tribes and the central authority was keenly felt. Faysal understood the tribal mentality and

¹ Robert Lansing, *The Big Four and Others of the Peace Conference* (Boston, 1921) p. 163. T. E. Lawrence, writing in 1916, made the following favourable comments on Faysal: 'Is tall, graceful, vigorous, almost regal in appearance. Aged thirty-one. Very quick and restless in movement. Far more imposing personally than any of his brothers, knows it and trades on it. Is as clear-skinned as a pure Circassian, with dark hair, vivid black eyes set a little sloping in his face, strong nose, short chin. Looks like a European, and very like the monument of Richard I, at Fontenay. He is hot-tempered, proud and impatient, sometimes unreasonable, and runs off easily at tangents. Possesses far more personal magnetism and life than his brothers, but less prudence. Obviously very clever, perhaps not over scrupulous. Rather narrow-minded, and rash when acts on impulse, but usually with enough strength to reflect, and then exact in judgment. Had he been brought up the wrong way might have become a barrack-yard officer. A popular idol, and ambitious; full of dreams, and the capacity to realize them, with keen personal insight, and a very efficient man of business.' (*Arab Bulletin*, 26 November 1916. Reprinted in A. W. Lawrence, ed., *Secret Despatches from Arabia* (London, Golden Cockerel Press, 1939) pp. 37-8.)

knew how to speak and behave like a Bedouin, having himself spent his early life and his war years in the desert. He won the confidence of the leading tribal shaykhs in Iraq, and acted as a link between the tribal and the town populations. But his policy towards the tribes was more positive than merely to demand their submission to authority; he fully understood their problems, and by the distribution of land and the reorganization of the irrigation system he sought the eventual settlement of the tribes and their accommodation to agriculture.

Occupying such a unique position in the life of his country, Faysal inevitably emerged as her unrivalled national hero. It is true that as a constitutional monarch he had limited powers; but in identifying himself with Iraq's need and aspirations, he played the role of the reformer and the benevolent monarch who could call and dismiss Cabinets at his own pleasure. He was indeed criticized for concentrating as much power as possible in his own hands; but this concentration of power, in a country where the old local divisions were still very strong, was probably necessary in order to ensure the progress of Iraq. Faysal, moreover, took a moderate attitude towards the Westernization of his country. Situated between the revolutionary Kemalist and Pahlevi regimes in the north and east, and conservative Wahhabi Arabia in the south, the various religious and racial elements in Iraq could not watch these neighbouring systems with indifference. Faysal, who preferred to follow the *via media* in social change, proved to be the only stable factor in the working of a European system of government, imported into a country that had not yet had the time to create sufficient cohesion among its various racial-religious elements.

II

THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT¹

THE political organization of Iraq may best be understood by a discussion of the social and economic background. For the past has bequeathed to present-day Iraq serious social and economic problems which have greatly influenced the working of her Government.

From medieval times political power in Iraq (as, indeed, throughout the whole Arab world) was profoundly influenced by the social and economic structure of Arab society. The division of the population into the tribal and city dwellers on the one hand, and the ruling and ruled classes in the city on the other, naturally gave rise to the dual rivalry between the nomads and the central authority, and between the ruling oligarchy and the masses.

To begin with, the desert area of Iraq was inhabited by tribesmen whose habitual occupation was fighting. When the caliphs were strong enough to wage *Jihad* (holy war) against the neighbouring non-Muslim countries, the tribesmen were loyal to the central authority, since their superfluous energy was directed against the external enemy and they were amply compensated by the spoils of war. But when the Muslim conquests came to a standstill, the restless tribesmen could not remain idle; they became a source of serious threat to the central authority and they often turned against the cities.² The problem which later became of great concern to the central authority was how to protect the cities from periodic tribal raids. For centuries the function of the State was reduced merely to that of raising taxes from the urban population for the maintenance of a mercenary army to protect the cities from tribal raids. During the time of the decline of the Abbasids, as well as under the Mongols, this function was

¹ The main substance of this chapter was published in pamphlet form in 1944 under the title *The Government of Iraq*. The section dealing with the constitution was reproduced without acknowledgement in *The Middle East*, 1948, published by Europa Publication Co.

² It is interesting to note that during the conference of provincial governors held in Medina in A.D. 655, on the eve of the disturbances which culminated in the revolt against Uthman, the third Caliph, the astute governor, Abd-Allah ibn-Amir, suggested that the only possible solution to avert civil war was to start fresh campaigns against non-Muslims.

inherited by feudal lords of the various provincial administrations.¹ The policy of the Ottoman Turks, from the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, was one of 'tribe-smashing' and thus it aggravated the tension between the urban and tribal population on the one hand, and between the tribesmen and the central authority on the other.² It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that the Ottoman empire (during Midhat Pasha's governorship in Iraq) embarked on a policy of settlement by offering the tribal shaykhs lands for cultivation. This new policy, which helped to reconcile the shaykhs to authority, and to 'detribalize' their followers, strengthened, if it did not revive, the power of the landlords. The policy of the national Government of Iraq, while it contributed a great deal to the settlement of the tribes and the regulation of their movements, could not, especially after the death of Faysal, contribute to the co-operation of the tribal shaykhs with the central authority. The tribal shaykhs, as will be pointed out later, often revolted against the Government in defence of their feudal rights.

In the cities the population of Iraq was divided into the relatively small but wealthy class, and the wretched and exploited masses. Hundreds of thousands of them were, and still are, without home, without land, without schools, and even without personal property. They were constantly threatened by starvation and disease. The gap between them and the landlords was, and still is, so wide that those on the lowest level could never hope to reach the one above. This has resulted partly from the striking absence of an important middle class, but mainly from the wretchedness of the illiterate masses, stricken with poverty and disease. The feudal lords, whether under the Arab or the Ottoman administrations, supported authority so long as it protected their ascendancy and vested interests. The rank and file, utterly neglected, and despairing of any hope of improvement, have become a great source of unrest to the existing regime in Iraq. These masses have often revolted in the past on various pretexts such as religious differences and nationalism; but today they are attracted by

¹ For the rise of the feudal system in the Arab world, see A. N. Poliak, *Feudalism in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and the Lebanon, 1250–1900* (London, Luzac, 1939).

² 'The result', says Brigadier Longrigg, 'was to inflame tribal Iraq to worse conditions than any remembered, to drive cultivators back to the desert, and, at the moment when modern communications were appearing, to reduce the country to the last weakness and misery.' (S. H. Longrigg, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (London, Oxford University Press, 1925) p. 290.)

Communist propaganda. The real cause of their unrest is their deplorable socio-economic conditions.

Arab nationalism, which arose as a protest against the Ottoman administration, received the enthusiastic support of the lower classes because the leaders of the movement championed the cause of all Arabs against Ottoman oppression. The most enthusiastic leaders of the nationalist movement were young men who had received military training in Istanbul and some of them came from poor families. The activities of the army officers bore fruit in the establishment of nationalist governments; but their narrow nationalist view, when they were charged with ruling the people, would not allow the more enlightened and liberal young men who emerged after the First World War to share authority with them.

The position of the moderate and liberal groups in Iraq was rendered the more hopeless by the absence of an important middle class whose interests lay between the landowners and the masses. It is true that in predominantly agricultural countries, where feudalism persisted for so long, it is not possible to expect a rapid rise of the middle class. But the mandatory Powers, who were charged by the League of Nations to advise the native Arab governments, failed to lend support to the liberal groups, because they were primarily interested in maintaining public order with the least possible expenditure of money and man-power by avoiding clashes with influential groups. These Powers have in fact even supported the feudal lords against the moderate and liberal groups. As Miss Warriner rightly stated, 'the mandatory Powers in Syria and Iraq were obliged to rely on the power of the landlords and sheikhs to a greater extent than the Ottoman Government did'.¹

But this conservative policy of the Western Powers has proved to be disastrous both to their gospel of democracy and to the stability of the newly created regimes in the Arab world. For the moderate and liberal groups, failing to gain sufficient support from an infant middle class and disgusted with what they denounced as a 'reactionary' policy of the democratic Powers, gradually began to think that their future would depend on gaining the support of the working class and the rank and file of the people.

The condition of the masses in Iraq was used as a slogan by the liberal groups and certain opportunists, who championed their cause

¹ Doreen Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948) p. 23.

against the ruling oligarchy and the landlords. The new ideology which has captured the imagination of the masses, since it promises a brighter future, is Communism. It is true that these people have not grasped even the most elementary principles of this doctrine, but they have been assured by Communist propaganda that, in Marx's words, they have 'nothing to lose but their chains'.

The Iraqi Government has dealt with this threatening situation merely by arresting and punishing the leaders of the movement, but no serious attempt has so far been made to improve social and economic conditions.¹ These will always give an opening to Communists. At bottom the problem may be stated thus: will the Government be able to persuade or force the feudal lords to give up some of their privileges in favour of liberal reforms? The future seems to be more explosive than either the Government or the landlords are willing to admit, for if they do not permit social evolution, social revolution will be inevitable.²

THE DRAFTING OF THE CONSTITUTION

Before studying the impact of the socio-economic conditions on the working of the Iraqi Government, a brief discussion of the origin, nature, and structure of this Government is necessary.

The Government of Iraq is a parliamentary Government, consciously modelled, at least in form, on the Government of the United Kingdom. The first step taken after the revolt against the British administration was to establish a provisional Government (October 1920) under the leadership of the Naqib of Baghdad, Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaylani. The provisional Government's function was to make preliminary preparations before the accession of Faisal, whose nomination for the throne had been proposed at the Cairo Conference (March 1921), and confirmed by a plebiscite in Iraq which was held in July. Faisal was proclaimed King on 23 August 1921, and this event marked the beginning of the national Government of Iraq. But though the Government was established in 1921, its constitutional organization was not completed until 1924, when the Organic Law was drawn up and submitted to a Constituent Assembly for approval.

Constitutional government had been envisaged some time before the Iraqi Government was formed. Article 22 of the League Covenant

¹ See pp. 274-5, below.

² See a leading article by Kamil Chadirchi (leader of the National Democratic Party) to this effect in *Sawt al-Ahali*, 13 August 1946.

stated with regard to the former Ottoman territories placed under mandate, that their existence as independent nations could be provisionally recognized subject only to the rendering of 'administrative advice and assistance' by a mandatory Power until such time as they were able to stand alone, and the original draft mandate for Iraq, which was later replaced by a Treaty of Alliance, referred to the need for a constitution for Iraq. When the Iraqi Council of State proclaimed Faysal King of Iraq (11 July 1921) it was decided that his Government should be a 'constitutional, representative, and democratic Government, limited by law'. King Faysal had himself declared, on his accession, that he would promulgate a constitution.

The main provisions of the constitution, however, were embodied in Article 3 of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 10 October 1922, in which it was stipulated:¹

His Majesty, the King of Iraq, agrees to frame an Organic Law for presentation to the Constituent Assembly of Iraq and to give effect to the said Law, which shall contain nothing contrary to the provisions of the present Treaty and shall take account of the rights, wishes, and interests of all the populations inhabiting Iraq. This Organic Law shall ensure to all complete freedom of conscience and free exercise of all forms of worship, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals. It shall provide that no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Iraq on the ground of race, religion, or language, and shall secure that the right of each community to maintain its own schools for the education of its own members in its own language, while conforming to such educational requirements of a general nature as the Government of Iraq may impose, shall not be denied or impaired. It shall prescribe the constitutional procedure, whether legislative or executive, by which decisions will be taken on all matters of importance, including those involving questions of fiscal, financial, and military policy.

It is to be noted that the foregoing Article lays down the foundation not only of a Bill of Rights for Iraq, but also the fundamental principles governing its framework of government. For this reason Article 3 of the Treaty of 1922 is an important landmark in the constitutional history of Iraq.

The drafting of the Organic Law, as well as discussions on its provisions, were more the work of the committees which prepared

¹ Great Britain and Iraq. *Treaty of Alliance signed at Baghdad, 10 October 1922. Protocol of 10 October 1922 signed at Baghdad 30 April 1923, together with Agreements of 16 October 1922, signed at Baghdad 25 March 1924. (Ratified 19 December 1924.) Cmd. 2370. (London, H.M.S.O., 1925; Treaty Series no. 17.)*

the draft than of the Constituent Assembly. As early as the autumn of 1921 a committee of two, Major (now Sir) Hubert Young and Mr (now Sir) Edwin Drower in consultation with Mr (now Sir) Nigel Davidson, prepared the first draft, drawing its provisions from the constitutions of Australia, New Zealand, &c.

King Faysal, while accepting in principle the first draft, referred it to an Iraqi committee of three: Naji as-Suwaydi, Minister of Justice; Sasun Hiskayl, Minister of Finance; and Rustum Haydar, Secretary to King Faysal. This committee objected to the first draft because it allotted too much power to the Crown. The committee prepared its own draft, drawing its main provisions from the Ottoman constitution.

The two drafts were separately sent to the Colonial Office in London, but later the two committees met, apparently on an order from London, and prepared a synthesis of the two. In this synthesis the powers of the Crown were reduced and the ministers were made responsible to Parliament, but the Crown was empowered to legislate by decrees when Parliament was not in session. The Iraqi ministers objected to this. Thereupon the synthesis was referred to London in February 1923. The Colonial Office supported the Iraqi point of view. With some minor modifications the draft was returned in April 1923. Some further slight revisions were made in Baghdad, of which the Colonial Office also approved, and the draft Organic Law was finally completed in the autumn of 1923.¹

The draft Organic Law had to wait for the Constituent Assembly to be convened before it was submitted for approval. A Royal *irada* (decree) was issued on 19 October, ordering elections for the Constituent Assembly to begin on 24 October 1922. The elections were at first interrupted and opposed by the Shi'i *Ulama* (religious divines), but were resumed on 12 July 1923, and finally completed on 25 February 1924. The Constituent Assembly began its work on 27 March 1924.

The work of the Constituent Assembly was mainly devoted to a discussion of the Treaty of 1922, which lasted for more than two and a half months. Discussion on the Organic Law hardly lasted a month—from 14 June to 10 July 1924. The draft Organic Law was referred to a special committee as early as 10 April 1924, which did not,

¹ See Naji as-Suwaydi's statement on the work of the committees in *Muthakarat al-Majlis at-Ta'sisi* (Proceedings of the Constituent Assembly), vol. 1, pp. 451–4. See also P. W. Ireland, *Iraq: a Study in Political Development* (London, Cape, 1937) pp. 373–82.

however, work seriously on the draft since discussion of the treaty hardly left time to concentrate on other matters. But when suddenly and unexpectedly the Assembly proceeded to ratify the treaty, the special committee had hardly examined thoroughly more than sixteen articles.

It may be said that on the whole no essential modifications were made by the Constituent Assembly. It is to be noted that, on some occasions, after essential proposals had been adopted, counter-proposals were made to go back to the original draft. The proposal concerning the dissolution of Parliament with the concurrence of the Senate is a case in point. It was contended that the Cabinet should not have a free hand in the dissolution of Parliament, and consequently a proposal was made that dissolution should only be carried out with the concurrence of the Senate. The proposal was adopted and carried by the majority of the Assembly. In a later session that Article was re-examined and the original Article of the draft was reinstated.¹ Some modifications were agreed to, but were only concerned with minor points and were mainly verbal in character. It may be argued, however, that the draft Organic Law was carefully prepared by the various committees which had been set up to cover the preparatory work, and which did indeed save a great deal of time in the work of the Constituent Assembly. The Organic Law was approved and signed by the King on 21 March 1925, and immediately came into force.

The constitution of Iraq, if interpreted to mean all the fundamental laws dealing with the framework of the government, the distribution of authority, and the rights and obligations of the people, is more than the document known as the Organic Law of Iraq. During the mandatory period Iraq was ultimately under the control of the League of Nations. Article 22 of the League Covenant was accordingly the supreme law for Iraq as well as for any other mandated territory. From a historical point of view, therefore, the Iraqi constitution may be regarded as including the following instruments:

- (1) Article 22 of the League Covenant.
- (2) Article 3 of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 10 October 1922.
- (3) Articles 30-36 of the Treaty of Lausanne (which deal with the nationality of the Iraqis).
- (4) The Organic Law of 21 March 1925.

¹ *Muthakarat al-Majlis at-Ta'sisi*, vol. 1, pp. 663-4, vol. 2, p. 1071. For further examples, see *ibid.* vol. 2, pp. 891-2, 1014.

(5) The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 30 June 1930 (the various articles dealing with Iraq foreign policy and the control of internal communications).

(6) The Guarantees of the League of Nations.

(7) The constitutional rules and traditions that have developed in practice or that may be adopted from foreign constitutions as provided by Article 124 of the Organic Law.

The foregoing instruments are by no means ordinary laws or statutes; they are rather 'fundamental' laws, since no legislative body has the power to alter them by the ordinary process of legislation. They cannot be altered by statutes which, on the contrary, have to be enacted in a manner to conform to them. But it is to be noted that some of these documents are now only of historical value, since their provisions have either expired or were superseded by others upon the emancipation of Iraq from the mandate in 1932. Such are Article 22 of the League Covenant and Article 3 of the Treaty of 1922. Article 22 of the League Covenant ceased to be binding from the moment when Iraq became independent.¹ Article 3 of the Treaty of 1922 expired when the whole treaty was superseded by the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930. Articles 30–6 of the Treaty of Lausanne have been embodied in Article 5 of the Organic Law (as defined in the Nationality Law of 9 October 1924, and its amendments).

The Iraqi constitution may be classified among the so-called 'written constitutions'. Unlike the British constitution, all the instruments which are now embodied in the Iraqi constitution are 'written', i.e., were enacted and issued at a certain specified time. The document which is known as the Organic Law is the most important of all the constitutional instruments. It was agreed to by the Constituent Assembly on 10 July 1924, but did not come into force until 21 March 1925, when it was signed and officially promulgated by the King.

Finally, the Iraqi constitution is a rigid constitution in contrast to the flexible British constitution, because its provisions can only be amended by a special procedure. 'A flexible constitution', says Dicey, 'is one under which every law of every description can legally be changed with the same ease and in the same manner by one and the

¹ It is to be noted that while Article 22 ceased to be binding on Iraq as a mandated territory, Iraq had become bound by the whole League Covenant as a Member-State. Iraq is now bound by the Charter of the United Nations as an original member of the United Nations.

same body'; while the 'rigid constitution', he continues, 'is one under which certain laws generally cannot be changed in the same manner as ordinary laws.'¹ The rigidity of the Iraqi constitution, however, has been slightly diminished by inserting an Article in the Second Amendment Law to the effect that any constitutional practice from any foreign country may be adopted by a decision of a joint session of both Houses of Parliament if it is not contrary to the provisions of the Organic Law.²

One result of a 'rigid' constitution is that, as in the United States, the municipal (internal) laws of the country must necessarily be divided into ordinary and constitutional laws; the latter will always predominate, and other laws must conform to them. The term 'constitutional' is always used in countries whose constitutions are rigid in the sense that a particular law conforms to the provisions of the constitution; and the term 'unconstitutional' means that it is contrary to them. The procedure for determining whether laws are constitutional or not is provided for in countries with rigid constitutions by special courts such as the Supreme Court in the United States and the High Court in Iraq.³

Three steps are specified for the amendment of the Iraqi Organic Law. According to Article 118, 'Parliament may, within one year from the coming into force of the Organic Law, amend any of the matters of secondary importance contained therein or add to them . . . provided that Parliament shall agree by a two-thirds majority of votes in both Chambers'. The period specified in this Article (i.e. 21 March 1925 to 21 March 1926), during which an amendment law was passed on 29 July 1925, may be regarded as the period of the least rigidity of the Iraqi constitution. The amendment law of July 1925 dealt only with matters of secondary importance such as the method of appointing a representative of the King during his absence outside Iraq, as well as specifying a period of four months as the maximum limit for his absence, unless Parliament decides otherwise.

After five years of its coming into force (i.e. between 21 March 1925 and 21 March 1930), the Organic Law was not to be amended at all; it was, accordingly, in a state of absolute rigidity. It is to be

¹ A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, 8th ed. (London, Macmillan, 1923) pp. 122-3.

² Article 124. See M. Khadduri, 'Has the Iraqi Constitution become more or less Rigid after the Recent Amendment?', *al-Qadha*, vol. 4 (May 1945) pp. 46-54.

³ For the Iraqi High Court see p. 27, below.

noted, however, that in practice four years was the only period of absolute rigidity, since Article 118 permitted amendment in matters of secondary importance within the first year of the coming into force of the Organic Law. The five-year period had also expired and in practice only one more procedure is left for amendment.¹

Since 21 March 1930 the Organic Law may be amended, under Article 119, in the following manner:

Every amendment must be approved by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate by a majority comprising two-thirds of the members of each Assembly. After it has been approved the Chamber of Deputies will be dissolved and a new Chamber elected. The amendment adopted by the dissolved Parliament will be submitted to the new Chamber of Deputies and to the Senate a second time, and if it receives the approval of both Assemblies by a majority comprising two-thirds of the members of each Assembly it shall be submitted to the King for confirmation and promulgation.

In 1943 the Iraqi Organic Law was again amended by the Second Amendment Law of 27 September. The new provisions of this law, as inserted in the body of the constitution, will be dealt with in the following sections of this chapter, but the circumstances and the procedure followed in the process of amendment will be fully discussed in a later chapter.

The other constitutional instruments, being international in character, may be modified or changed through the usual diplomatic channels by agreement between the parties concerned.

THE MONARCHICAL SYSTEM

The monarchical system in Iraq, it will be remembered, was instituted before the Organic Law was drafted. It was predetermined by Arab tradition and by British support for the Hashimi family and for the monarchical system.² The monarchy of Iraq was defined in a decision made by the Provisional Government on 11 July 1921, which declared that it should be 'constitutional, representative, and democratic'. The Organic Law confirmed the establishment of the monarchy, but added, 'sovereignty belongs to the nation, and is entrusted

¹ In the course of the debate on this article in the Constituent Assembly it was stated that the period of absolute rigidity was adopted in order to prohibit any change in the Constitution during the duration of the Treaty of 1922, as revised by the Protocol of 1923. See *Muthakarat al-Majlis at-Ta'sisi*, vol. 2, p. 988.

² There was a small section of the people who supported a republic. The idea, however, was not encouraged.

by the people to King Faysal, son of Husayn, and after him to his heirs'.¹

The King attains his majority on reaching his eighteenth year. 'In the event of the throne passing to a person below that age, the King's prerogatives shall be exercised by a Regent, chosen by the former King, until such time as the King attains his majority.' Parliament should approve this appointment. 'Should Parliament not approve, or should the former King fail to appoint a Regent, the Regent shall be appointed by Parliament.'² His Majesty King Faysal II had not attained his majority upon the death of King Ghazi on 4 February 1939, and consequently His Royal Highness Amir Abd al-Ilah, who was appointed Regent, will remain the Regent until King Faysal II attains his majority in 1953.³

'The King is safeguarded and is not responsible.'⁴ He is the supreme head of the State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. He confirms laws, orders their promulgation, and supervises their execution. He may also proclaim martial law, subject to the conditions of the Organic Law. He issues orders for the holding of general elections and for the convocation of Parliament. He opens Parliament, adjourns, prorogues, or dissolves it. When Parliament is not in session, and the necessity arises for the maintenance of order and expenditure of public moneys not authorized by the budget or by special law, or for the fulfilment of treaty obligations, the King issues ordinances with the concurrence of the Council of Ministers, directing that the necessary steps shall be taken according to circumstances. These ordinances have the force of law, provided that they are not contrary to the provisions of the constitution, and must be laid before Parliament at its first session.⁵

The King selects the Prime Minister, and appoints the other

¹ Article 19. In Article 20 it is stated that the heir apparent should be the eldest son of the King in a direct line.

² Article 22.

³ According to the Second Amendment Law of 1943, Amir Abd al-Ilah has become the Crown Prince until King Faysal II shall have an heir apparent.

⁴ Article 25. This Article is an expression of the doctrine of the perfection of judgement in English Constitutional Law. 'The King', says Blackstone, 'is not only incapable of doing wrong, but of thinking wrong.' The necessary result is that responsibility has been shifted to the King's Ministers, since they countersign his orders. The position in England is, as Thiers said, that 'the King reigns but does not govern'.

⁵ Article 26. 'If Parliament does not confirm the ordinances, the Government shall notify the termination of the operation thereof, and they shall stand repealed from the date of such notification.'

ministers on his recommendation. In practice the selection of a Prime Minister by the King (or the Regent) is made only after consultation with a number of former Prime Ministers and ministers. According to the Second Amendment Law of 1943 the King can, likewise, dismiss his Prime Minister 'if public interest renders it necessary to do so'.

The King, on the recommendation of the Cabinet, appoints the members of the Senate. The constitution does not specify that the appointments should be on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, but in practice this is so.

The King exercises his powers by means of royal *iradas*. They are issued on the proposal of the responsible minister or ministers, with the concurrence of the Prime Minister, and are signed by them. This transfer of responsibility to the King's ministers, as in any other parliamentary government, has in practice delegated the exercise of the powers of the Crown to the Cabinet, subject only to the approval of the King.

THE CABINET

The Cabinet is made up of the Prime Minister and a number of other ministers. 'The number of ministers shall not be less than seven, including the Prime Minister.'¹ A number of deputy ministers and ministers without portfolio may be appointed when there is a need for them. At present the Iraqi Cabinet is made up of the following:

The Prime Minister
Minister of the Interior
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister of Finance
Minister of Defence
Minister of Communications and Works
Minister of Justice
Minister of Education
Minister of Economics
Minister of Social Affairs

A member of the Iraqi Cabinet must be a Member of Parliament. A person appointed a minister who is not already a Member of Parliament may not retain his position more than six months, unless he is in the meantime appointed a senator or elected a deputy.

The Cabinet is responsible for the conduct of public affairs, and the

¹ Article 64.

ministers are jointly responsible to the Chamber of Deputies for all the acts of the Cabinet as well as being individually responsible for the policies of their own ministries. Should the Chamber pass a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet, the Cabinet must resign. If the resolution in question relates to one minister only, this minister must resign. The vote of no confidence, however, may be postponed at the request of the Prime Minister, but once only, for a period which should not exceed eight days. During that period the Chamber may not be dissolved.

The Cabinet meets once or twice a week under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, and all its decisions are submitted to the King for approval before they are carried out.

PARLIAMENT

Legislative power in Iraq, as in Great Britain, is vested in Parliament and the King. Parliament is composed of two Houses, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Members of the Senate cannot exceed one-fourth of the total number of the Chamber of Deputies. They are appointed by the King from among Iraqis who are prominent in public life and have served their country with distinction.¹ A senator should not be less than forty years of age. The term of membership is eight years, and 'a former senator may be again appointed'.² A senator (like a deputy) may, with the approval of the Senate, 'be deputed to undertake important duties in the service of the State, for a period not exceeding two years'.³ The Senate meets and adjourns at the same time as the Chamber of Deputies.

The Chamber of Deputies is an elected and representative body composed on a basis of one deputy for every 20,000 male inhabitants. The deputies must not be less than thirty years of age and are elected according to an Electoral Law by indirect election through a secret ballot. The term of the Chamber of Deputies is four ordinary sessions, each session of one year, beginning on the first day of December.⁴ The duration of each annual session is six months, and the other six are a parliamentary vacation.

The right of suffrage is not universal, because women do not vote;

¹ Provided they are not relatives of the King, who are also not eligible to be deputies.

² Article 32.

³ Article 31.

⁴ If that day falls on a legal holiday, then the following day is chosen (Article 38).

but it is universal 'manhood' suffrage. Any person is eligible to vote who (1) is an Iraqi subject, (2) has completed his twentieth year, (3) has not lost his civil rights, (4) has not been convicted of any crime whatsoever or of a misdemeanour affecting his honour (such as theft, bribery, misappropriation, forgery, fraud, &c.), (5) is not a lunatic or mentally defective, (6) is not an undischarged bankrupt, (7) has had no order of inhibition passed against him which has not been released.¹ All citizens not so disqualified are 'Primary Electors' and can vote for the 'Secondary Electors'. There is one secondary elector for every 250 primary electors, and it is their duty to elect the deputies. Secondary electors retain their status during the life of one Parliament for the purpose of electing a new deputy or to fill a vacancy. Deputies are elected for a term of four years and are eligible for re-election. Until 1935 the number of deputies was 88 (including 8 deputies representing the Christians and Jews), but the number was increased to 108 in 1935, and to 118 in 1943. According to the new Electoral Law (1946) the number of Christian and Jewish deputies has been raised to 12, 6 for each community. The total number of deputies is now 132, since the population of Iraq has increased.

Legislation can be initiated in the Chamber of Deputies or proposed by the Government.² Any deputy, if supported by ten of his colleagues, may propose legislation, except such as concerns financial matters. If the proposal is accepted by the Chamber, it is sent to the Cabinet in order that a draft law may be prepared. If it is rejected it may not be reintroduced during the same session. A draft law received in one of the Chambers is, as a general rule, referred after the first reading to one of the standing committees for examination and report.³ Fundamental amendments are frequently recommended by the committee and usually accepted by the Chamber at the second reading of the draft law. Draft laws which are prepared by the Government must be submitted to either one of the two Houses;

¹ Soldiers and policemen serving under arms do not participate in the elections, but if they are on leave in their localities during the election they may participate.

² The Senate cannot initiate legislation. It endeavoured to obtain this right in 1926, but the proposal was rejected.

³ There are various standing committees both in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. At the beginning of every session the following committees are elected: Petition Committee, Committee on Administration, Military Committee, Finance Committee, Foreign Affairs Committee, Economic Committee, Legal Committee, and Education Committee. A minister is allowed to attend the meeting of the committee which examines draft laws related to his ministry, but he is not allowed to be a member of or to vote in any standing committee.

if passed, they are presented to the other.¹ The Budget Law must be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies by the Minister of Finance. A draft law twice rejected by the one House, but insisted upon by the other, is put before a joint assembly and should be accepted by a two-thirds majority.² Draft laws are passed article by article, and then again as a whole; but each House 'may resolve that it is enough to decide on the draft as a whole only, in which case the members shall have the right to discuss the articles'.³ Draft laws, when passed by both Houses, become laws only after being confirmed by the King. The King may confirm or reject legislation, stating reasons for so doing, within a period of three months. If one of the Houses decides that a law is of urgent nature, it must be confirmed, or returned within a period of fifteen days for reconsideration, with a statement of the reasons for rejection.

Every Member of Parliament may put questions to and demand explanations from ministers. Meetings of both Houses are open to the public unless one minister, or four senators, or ten deputies, request that the debate should be *in camera*.

Members of Parliament have absolute freedom of speech and enjoy parliamentary immunity. They are not liable to arrest, nor can they be brought to trial while Parliament is in session, unless they have been arrested while committing a crime, or the House of which they are members has passed a resolution requiring their arrest.

CONTROL OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

Foreign relations are conducted in the name of the King. He appoints and dismisses all diplomatic representatives, concludes treaties (subject to the approval of Parliament), and declares war, subject only to the consent of the Cabinet. Conclusion of peace treaties must be approved by Parliament.⁴

On 7 September 1927 the Cabinet passed a resolution to the effect that 'International agreements of minor importance or of a scientific nature and not concluded between the heads of States concerned, but between high officials of the governments of such States, need not of themselves be submitted to Parliament . . .' Thus agreements of limited scope are concluded by the executive alone.

¹ In practice draft laws are submitted first to the Chamber of Deputies and then to the Senate.

² By a request of the Prime Minister or any minister a draft law may be submitted at a joint assembly, but in order to be accepted it requires a two-thirds majority.

³ Article 55.

⁴ Article 28.

The King, likewise, can issue such ordinances as may be required, without submitting them to Parliament, for the purpose of fulfilling treaty obligations already approved by Parliament or the Constituent Assembly.

There are, however, some international obligations which qualify the King's powers with regard to foreign relations. First, there is the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 30 June 1930, by which Iraq is bound to have 'full and frank consultation with Great Britain in all matters of foreign policy'; to be Great Britain's ally if the latter is engaged in war; and to give such aid as may be possible on Iraqi territory including 'the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes, and means of communication'. Secondly, Iraq is bound by the declaration which the Iraqi Prime Minister, on behalf of his Government, accepted, as embodied in the report of the League Council Committee of 9 May 1932. The declarations embodied the so-called Seven Guarantees which a mandated territory had to accept before the termination of the mandate, including respect for minority rights, the privileges and immunities of foreigners, all obligations assumed by the former mandatory Power, and any rights acquired during the mandatory regime.¹

Finally, Iraq was a member of the League of Nations from 3 October 1932, and is an original member of the United Nations and of the Arab League. Iraq is also bound by a score of treaties with neighbouring countries as well as European and Eastern countries, which regulate her foreign relations.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

Under the Ottoman Administration Iraq was divided into three *vilayat* (provinces), each governed by a *vali* (governor) who was directly responsible for his administration to Istanbul. The three *vilayats* were: Mosul, Baghdad, and Basrah. Each *vilayat* was sub-divided into *sanjaqs* (districts), governed by a *qa'immaqam*, who was responsible to the *vali*.

After the establishment of the Iraqi Government a new administrative system, based partly on the Ottoman system, was set up. In 1927 a law was passed which divided Iraq into fourteen *liwas* (divisions) each governed by a *mutasarrif*. The *mutasarrif*, who represents the central government in the *liwa*, is responsible to the Minister of the

¹ For text of the Seven Guarantees, see League of Nations, *Official Journal* (1931) pp. 2057–8; and for text of the declaration, *ibid.* (July 1932) pp. 1347–50.

Interior. He is assisted in the administration of the *liwa* by an Administrative Council. Every *liwa* is subdivided into a number of *qada's*, administered by a *qa'immaqam*. Every *qada'* is also subdivided into a number of *nahiyas*, administered by *mudirs*. The *mutasarrif* supervises the entire administration of the *liwa*. The *mudir* is responsible to the *qa'immaqam*, and the latter is responsible to the *mutasarrif*.

Municipal affairs are administered by means of a Municipal Council for every city or town, elected by the people and presided over by a mayor who is appointed by the Minister of Interior and is responsible to him for the affairs of the municipality.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The judicial system of Iraq is designed to be free from interference by any foreign agency. The judicial agreement, supplementary to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 30 June 1930, stipulated that a number of British judges are to be employed by the Iraqi Government in order to insure the just administration of law in the country. It was owing to the existence of this agreement that the 'Capitulations' inherited from the former Ottoman Empire were finally abolished.

'The Courts shall be free from interference in their affairs.'¹ Thus the constitution has recognized, at least in principle, the doctrine of the separation of powers (so far as concerns the independence of the judiciary), as in every other modern State, in order to insure justice. 'Every trial shall be held publicly, unless there is some legally prescribed reason for holding it in secret. The judgements of the Courts and the proceedings during trials may be published unless they relate to secret sittings.'² The judges are appointed by the King upon the nomination of the Minister of Justice, who is in turn assisted by a selection Committee, and they are 'not to be removed except in the circumstances mentioned in the special law dealing with the conditions governing their qualifications, appointments, grades, and the method of their dismissal'.³

There are three types of courts in Iraq. They are: (1) civil courts, (2) religious courts, (3) special courts.

The jurisdiction of the civil courts extends to all matters of civil, commercial, criminal law, and actions for or against the Government (with the exception in each case of matters which come within the jurisdiction of the religious courts).

¹ Article 71.

² Article 72.

³ Article 68.

The religious courts include the *Shari'a* courts, whether Sunni or Shi'i, which deal with the personal status of the Muslims and the administration of *awqaf* (pious foundations), and the Spiritual Councils of the Christians, Jews, and other religious communities which deal with matters relating to marriage, dowry, divorce, &c., and other matters of personal status of non-Muslims. The religious courts administer justice in accordance with the religious laws or traditions such as the *Shari'a* (Islamic law) or Christian and Jewish religious tenets. The *Shari'a* courts follow the rules of the *Shari'a* peculiar to each Islamic sect, and the *qadi* (judge) is 'a member of the sect to which belong the majority of the inhabitants of the place to which he is appointed'.¹ Both Sunni and Shi'i (or Ja'fari) *qadis* are to be found in the cities of Baghdad and Basrah.

The special courts, which are usually set up only when necessity requires, are the following:

1. The High Court, composed of eight members, excluding the President, elected by the Senate and appointed by the King, four from among the senators, and four from the judges of the Court of Cassation or other senior judges. The court sits under the presidency of the President of the Senate or, if he cannot be present, his deputy. If Parliament is not in session, the members are to be appointed by the Cabinet and the King. The High Court is called 'to try ministers and members of Parliament for political offences connected with their public duties'; to try judges of the Court of Cassation²; and 'to decide matters connected with the interpretation of laws, and their conformity with the constitution'.³ Thus the Iraqi High Court, like the Supreme Court of the United States, is the only agency that can declare a law to be unconstitutional, but while the latter sits permanently to accomplish such function, the former can only decide when called to do so.

2. The Special Court (*Diwan Khas*) is constituted at the request of a minister, and its members are selected according to a special law (three of them from the judges of the Court of Cassation and three from the senior military officers, when the matter is connected with the army, or three from the senior administrative officials). The purpose of the court is to deal with the interpretation of laws (other than those for the purpose of the High Court) or regulations to

¹ Article 77.

² An accused person is declared guilty by a majority of two-thirds of the Court and the judgement is final (Article 85).

³ Article 81.

decide whether they contravene the law on which they are based. Decisions of the *Diwan Khas* are by a two-thirds majority.

3. Special courts or committees for dealing with certain military offences, tribal disputes (in accordance with tribal custom as provided by a tribal law), disputes between Government officials and the Government, and disputes relating to the possession or boundaries of land. Courts martial, as provided in Article 120 of the Organic Law, may also be established as special courts in an area which is proclaimed in danger or where there are disturbances.

The application of the existing laws and regulations may be suspended by the proclamation declaring martial law in force, in such places and to such extent as may be prescribed in such proclamation, provided that those charged with the execution of the proclamation shall be subject to the legal consequences of their acts, until a special law has been passed by Parliament exempting them therefrom.¹

While the Iraqi judicial system is sound in principle, there are certain practices which have been criticized by a number of Iraqi lawyers, such as the necessity of insuring the independence of the system from the influence of the Executive. The Minister of Justice, who has no direct influence over the judges, may exercise certain indirect influence mainly by means of transfer or by delegating certain judicial powers to Government officials. There have also been complaints with regard to certain abuses in the orders of arrest, in investigations, and in the relatively high expenses of the judicial process, disproportionate to the general standard of living in the country.²

WORKING OF THE GOVERNMENT

On 21 March 1925 the Organic Law was promulgated, but an established monarchy and a Council of Ministers had been in existence since 1921. To complete the form of a parliamentary government it only remained to order the elections to begin. The election of deputies was completed in June, and the senators were appointed in July, 1925. The first Parliament met on 16 July 1925, in a special session, since the Organic Law then stipulated that the ordinary session of Parliament must begin on 1 November and last for four months.

Since the establishment of the monarchy, three sovereigns have sat

¹ Article 120.

² See Husayn al-Jamil, 'al-Qadha' al-Iraqi', *ar-Rabita* (28 April 1945) pp. 552-4.

on the throne of Iraq: King Faysal I (23 August 1921–8 September 1933), King Ghazi I (8 September 1933–4 April 1939), and King Faysal II (4 April 1939–). On the death of King Ghazi, the Crown Prince was only five years old. Thereupon Amir Abd al-Ilah, it will be recalled, was appointed Regent until King Faysal II should reach his majority in 1953.

From the establishment of the Iraqi Government in 1921 up to the termination of the mandate in 1932, Iraq had fourteen Cabinets, including the Provisional Government. From 1932 until the time of writing (January 1950) Iraq has had another thirty-one Cabinets, which makes all in all forty-five during twenty-nine years. In other words, Iraq has had an average of one new Cabinet every seven and a half months.¹ This frequency in the change of Iraqi Cabinets was considered by M. Orts, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in 1930, as possible evidence of incapacity for self-government. The British accredited representative, Major Hubert Young, while admitting that Cabinets changed too frequently, could not agree that this was evidence of political incapacity. It only meant, he said, that the public in Iraq have never appreciated the benefits of the mandatory regime. Each government as it takes office and attempts to reconcile itself to this regime is attacked for its inability to attain complete independence and gives way to the opposition to let them see if they can do better.² While admitting the disadvantages of the system, Major Young saw in it the compensating feature that a larger number of individuals had the opportunity of obtaining parliamentary experience. He then qualified his statement by adding that each new Cabinet was not necessarily composed of new individuals, for some of them 'appear again and again, though sometimes on different sides'.³ Major Young's statement may be substantiated by the fact that in the first thirteen Cabinets which were formed (until the end of the mandate) only forty-six different individuals held office as ministers. In the total forty-five Cabinets the number has come very near to 120.

The reason why the frequency of Cabinet changes increased after

¹ For a table of the Iraqi Cabinets, see Appendix II.

² League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, 19th Session (November 1930) p. 84.

³ General Nuri as-Sa'id, who had been nine times Prime Minister, aptly remarked: 'With a small pack of cards, you must shuffle them often.' The statement is quoted by Wendell Willkie (without mentioning General Nuri) in his *One World* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1943) p. 19.

Iraq's rise to statehood is to be found in the lack of solidarity among the members of almost every Cabinet, the acute competition among politicians, the absence of political parties which could have offered legal channels for political strife, and the interference of the army in politics.

Parliament has met regularly since 1925. The original senators nominated in July 1925 remained in office until June 1929, when lots were drawn for the retirement of half of their number.¹ Five of the retired members were reappointed, and four new senators were added. In 1933 the remaining original senators retired, having completed their term of eight years. Since 1933 half the senators have retired regularly every four years. As to the Chamber of Deputies, there have been so far twelve different Chambers elected; the first in 1925, the second in 1928, the third in 1930, the fourth in 1933, the fifth in 1934, the sixth in 1935, the seventh and eighth in 1937, the ninth in 1939, the tenth in 1943, the eleventh in 1947, and the twelfth in 1948. The ninth Chamber was the only one which completed its term of four years. At the first election there were some people who were reluctant to enter Parliament, but at the second election candidates were far more numerous and showed themselves willing to get seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Tribal shaykhs as well as city dwellers were represented; indeed it has always been the complaint of the city dweller that the tribal shaykhs were over-represented. Another criticism often made by the city dwellers is that the elections in the country have been rigidly controlled by the Government, so much so that the Government nominees were always elected deputies. This tendency has manifested itself lately in the cities as well, and thus Parliament has been subordinated to the executive and lost its earlier spirit of opposition. Control of the elections and frequent dissolution of Parliament have rendered Parliament completely at the mercy of the Cabinet and incapable of passing a vote of no confidence in any of the forty-five Cabinets.

POLITICAL PARTIES

From the very establishment of the Iraqi Government there was keen interest in organizing political parties along Western European lines in order to develop a democratic form of government. Two

¹ Under Article 22 of the Organic Law (before the Second Amendment), half of the first appointed Senate must retire by lot to make possible the retirement of half the Senate every four years.

political parties were already in existence under the Ottoman regime, the Ahd and Haras al-Istiqlal, which aimed at defending Arab rights against the Turks. After the accession of Faysal to the throne in 1921, three new main parties were established: (1) the Watani (National) Party, led by Ja'far Abu 't-Timman; (2) the Sha'b (People's) Party led by Yasin al-Hashimi; and (3) The Taqqadum (Progressive) Party, led by Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun. These three parties had essentially the same objective, that is, the termination of the mandate and winning of independence. They differed only in means of achieving that objective, not on social or economic issues. The Taqaddum was dissolved when Sa'dun committed suicide.

In 1930 when General Nuri as-Sa'id concluded the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, a regrouping of parties immediately followed. General Nuri formed the Ahd Party (reviving the pre-war Ahd), whose aim was to carry into effect the Treaty of 1930 and to bring the mandate to an end. The treaty was regarded by rival politicians, such as Yasin al-Hashimi and his followers, as unsatisfactory for the realization of the national aspirations of Iraq. Former members of the Sha'b and Watani parties came together and organized the Ikha' al-Watani (National Brotherhood) Party. The leader of the Ikha' was Yasin al-Hashimi and the most prominent members were Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, Hikmat Sulayman, and Muhammad Zaki. The Watani Party, while officially remaining as a separate party, was in close alliance with the Ikha' for the purpose of opposing the Treaty of 1930. Like former parties, these new parties also aimed at achieving the independence of Iraq, and the only differences among them were on the means of effecting this.

After the winning of Iraq's independence in 1932 the Ahd Party was dissolved. The other two parties, though they survived after 1932, lost their purpose and were dissolved in 1934 and 1935 respectively. Thus all the political parties died natural deaths since their *raison d'être* had disappeared.

Shortly after Iraq won independence the leading politicians were invited by King Faysal to discuss the possibility of forming new parties on the basis of domestic issues, but Faysal's death postponed any action. After his death, leadership devolved upon the politicians who formed his entourage and the need for parties was even more pressing. But no new parties were organized, and the leading politicians made use of local conditions, at suitable opportunities, to achieve power.

CONCLUSION

It is to be noted that the form of the Iraqi Government, as provided in the constitution, is democratic; but there were many local forces which affected the working of the Government. The form was determined by the impact of Western ideals; the disruptive forces were to be found in the existing socio-economic conditions. Those local conditions, it will be recalled, were inherited by Iraq from the past. The Iraqi Government of today, therefore, is the outcome of a conflict between the form and the forces arising from local conditions. A conflict of this sort has inevitably led to an adaptation of the form; but such an adaptation, if it is to lead to progress, should not entirely sacrifice the form to satisfy existing local conditions. These local conditions could be gradually modified by developing new traditions influenced by the form. But such a process of adjustment naturally needs wise and balanced leadership in order to maintain the equilibrium necessary for a healthy adjustment.

Up to the end of the mandate the leaders of Iraq, guided by Faysal and advised by the mandatory Power, were able to initiate a process of adjustment which gave every promise of progress. When the mandate came to an end there was ground for confidence that the progress of the Iraqi Government was ensured. Judged by relative standards, Iraq possessed a modern form of government, a well-guided public opinion, and civil servants learning by experience and growing in efficiency. Above all there was the wise leadership of King Faysal, who inspired public spirit in every department of Government.

The rapid progress of Iraq, however, was interrupted suddenly and unexpectedly; it was Iraq's misfortune that the career of King Faysal was cut short in 1933. His health broke down, partly as a result of over-work, soon after Iraq had gained her independence. He went to Europe for a rest and died there in September 1933. With his death a period of disequilibrium followed. Personal differences among the politicians became more acute, and there was no Faysal to effect a compromise, or to maintain the link between the tribes and the town population.

On the death of King Faysal, his son, King Ghazi, then only twenty-one years old, came to the throne. During his short reign (1933-9) Iraq lacked the leadership which was necessary for stability and progress. After the termination of the mandate Iraq was more

than ever in need of the type of leadership which Faysal had provided so that a balance could be maintained between the form of government and local conditions, without which there can be no progress in Iraq. After Faysal's death, and while his successor was still young and inexperienced in public affairs, leadership devolved on a group of politicians who had formerly surrounded Faysal. It would have been possible for the politicians to handle the situation through political parties. But political parties virtually did not exist, since all of them, it will be recalled, died natural deaths after the termination of the mandate. The prospect of progress under a democratic regime has become less assured, and the younger generation of Iraq have become not only impatient with it, but have cast serious doubt on its value.

It is interesting to speculate on the prospects of parliamentary government in the Middle East. The subject has been discussed by a number of publicists and critics. Lord Cromer, writing on Egypt in 1908, asserted that 'the Legislative Assembly has, in practice, turned out to be the least useful and efficient. It was, and still is, too much in advance of the requirements and political education of the country. No real harm would be done if it were simply abolished.'¹ More recent writers, not less pessimistic than Lord Cromer, have held almost the same views. One official in Palestine declared to an American scholar: 'In . . . countries like Transjordan and Iraq, you can set up a native government, give them advice, and let them go. But if you want progress, you must have direct administration.'² The late Syrian nationalist, Dr Shahbandar, while admitting the value of parliamentary government for a country under foreign control as a means of limiting interference, contended that more rapid progress could be made only under a benevolent ruler.³

More recent opinions are less pessimistic in tone and are more favourable to democratic institutions in the Middle East. In discussing the question of terminating the Iraq mandate by the Permanent Mandates Commission, it was asserted by Great Britain that 'Iraq is a self-governing State . . . equipped with stable legislative, judicial, and administrative systems, and all the working machinery of a

¹ E. Baring, 1st Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (London, Macmillan 1908) vol. 2, p. 278.

² Quincy Wright, 'The Government of Iraq', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 20 (Nov. 1926) p. 761.

³ Abd ar-Rahman Shahbandar, *al-Qadaya q'l-Ijtima'-iyah al-Kubra* (Cairo, 1936) p. 93.

civilized government'.¹ M. Orts, a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, endorsed that statement and added that 'Iraq possessed all the political and administrative machinery of a State, and that in its constitution were embodied the principles on which the majority of modern constitutions were based, were facts which the Mandates Commission could affirm, seeing that they were within its field of observation'. M. Orts wanted only 'to know whether there existed in the country that spirit which animated these institutions and was the essential condition for their working'.² Sir Francis Humphrys, the British accredited representative, replied that the best answer could be found in the *Special Report*, pp. 11–12, in which it was stated:

. . . throughout the period under review a definite political impulse is evident behind all these changes. On the part of all responsible Iraqis there has been from the first a marked impatience of mandatory control and a fervent desire for independence. These are to be ascribed, not to ingratitude nor to lack of appreciation of the efforts of the mandatary and the League of Nations on behalf of Iraq, but to a growing national consciousness which will not be satisfied until the country is free from foreign control. This desire for independence which has found expression in continual pressure for a relaxation of mandatory control, is not in itself an unhealthy sign. It demonstrates, at least, that Iraqis generally are willing and eager to accept the burden and responsibilities on their behalf. The question of the capacity of Iraqis to assume these responsibilities is examined later in this report; but the fact that the desire to do so is present throughout Iraq is in itself evidence of a keen national spirit, without which the grant of independence would be as unprofitable as it would be unmerited.

In a country like Iraq, where the force of the old local traditions is still strong, it is not expected that the working of democratic institutions would admit of comparison with older Western countries accustomed to democratic traditions. The significance of democratic institutions in the Middle East, therefore, must depend on their possibilities in the future. At present their value must be regarded as mainly educational; that is, they are helping to develop democratic habits and traditions necessary for the functioning of democratic machinery. Young Iraqis have, however, often been impatient with the slow and inadequate progress made by their country in

¹ G. B., Colonial Office, *Special Report by H.B.M.'s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Progress of Iraq during the period 1920–31* (London H.M.S.O., 1931) p. 11.

² League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, 20th Session, p. 133.

democratic procedure; but social change, of its very nature, is always slow and evolutionary. What could with justice be expected from the present regime is a constructive plan to improve the local conditions which Iraq has inherited from the old Ottoman regime. The Iraqi Government would undoubtedly be able to carry out a plan of reform if it were animated by a more liberal, tolerant, and sympathetic spirit, with which it would bring cohesion to, and co-operation among, the various sections of the population. This is a necessary prerequisite for the working of a democratic Government in Iraq as well as, indeed, the whole Middle East.

III

TRIAL AND ERROR IN SELF-GOVERNMENT I

1932-6

THE admission of Iraq to the League of Nations marked the end of an epoch during which King Faisal and the Iraqi nationalists had been too much preoccupied in bringing the mandate to an end to pay proper attention to internal reforms. Shortly before the mandate was formally terminated, however, Faisal began to discuss with the leading ministers a reform programme for his would-be independent country. In the light of his past experience Faisal realized that Iraq's most urgent need, after winning her independence, was social and economic progress. In March 1932 he submitted to his ministers certain proposals of reform for comments. The memorandum was manifestly the work of a man who had observed the regime with a trained eye and keen interest. He noted that Iraq, as she stood in 1932, had not yet attained that cohesion among her various racial and religious communities necessary to create a modern nation. He noted, likewise, that the Iraqi Government, owing mainly to lack of resources and an inefficient army, was much weaker than the people. For it was then estimated that no less than 100,000 rifles were owned by the people as against 15,000 which the Government had in its possession.¹ Therefore, Faisal argued, no Iraqi Government could ever carry out a programme of reform unacceptable to the people. He advised his ministers to follow a policy of moderation, avoiding radical ideas which might arouse suspicion and cause a reaction among the ignorant majority, and seeking co-operation between the Government and the masses.

Faisal realized that such an approach might not ensure rapid progress. He accordingly suggested the following procedure: (1) increasing the existing armed forces and raising their standard of efficiency to a level that would enable the army to crush any two rebellions which might simultaneously arise in two different parts of

¹ The above was Faisal's estimate, but actually the number of rifles in tribal hands was much higher.

Iraq; (2) the carrying out of a policy of equality between the two Islamic sects (i.e. the Sunni and the Shi'i¹) and paying due respect to tribal traditions as well as to non-Islamic religions; (3) the settlement of land problems; (4) increasing the powers of the *liwa* (provincial) administrative and municipal councils; (5) opening a school for public officials which would provide efficient servants for the State on the basis of ability; (6) encouraging the infant industries of the country and starting new ones; (7) reorganizing the educational system; (8) reforming the system of government in such a way as to separate the executive from the legislative power, and reorganizing Government administration.

Faysal's proposals were favourably commented upon by his ministers. Even Naji as-Suwaydi, a former Prime Minister, who criticized a number of details, agreed with his general line of policy. Suwaydi endorsed Faysal's idea of the separation of the executive and legislative powers, and suggested that the ministers, as Government officials, should be appointed for a definite term of office in order to relieve them from legislative functions or parliamentary pressure which had often disturbed their administrative work. He also suggested amendment of the Electoral Law in order to ensure more adequate representation of the people and to put an end to the Government control of the elections.

When Iraq was admitted into membership of the League of Nations on 3 October 1932, Faysal thought that the time had come to apply his new policy. He took a hopeful view of securing the help of all public men and appealed to them, in the interest of their country, to forget all their quarrels and co-operate in carrying out his reform programme. He asked General Nuri as-Sa'id, who had been Prime Minister from 1930 to 1932, to resign in favour of a new administration, which was to include General Nuri himself and his opponents, the *Ikha' al-Watani* (National Brotherhood) Party. General Nuri, who was reluctant to resign, tendered his resignation on 27 October 1932.

The leaders of the *Ikha* Party, when invited to form a new Government, did not accept the offer at once, having pledged the nation never to recognize the new regime of independence on the basis of

¹ The Shi'i may be regarded as the first politico-religious sect which was formed in the first century of the Islamic era. The starting-point for the division of Islam into the Sunni (Orthodox) and Shi'i (Partisans) was a difference on the issue of the Caliphate. The Shi'is advocated the rights of the descendants of Ali (cousin of Muhammad), but the Sunnis rejected their claims in favour of an elective system of the Caliphate.

the treaty with England which General Nuri had concluded in 1930. But they were decidedly pleased to know that the way to authority was at last open to them. It was decided, accordingly, to form a transitional Cabinet which was designed to prepare the way for a new Government to be formed on the basis of new elections.

For this purpose Faysal invited Naji Shawkat, then a neutral politician and sympathetic to his policy, to form a Government on 3 November 1932. The members of the new Government were mainly recruited from senior civil servants, chosen to run the administration in a business-like manner, rather than to lay down a new policy. Parliament was dissolved on 8 November 1932, and the new elections were held in February 1933, in an atmosphere of indifference since there were no political issues involved. Only the Watani Party boycotted the elections on the grounds that there were restrictions on the liberty of the press. The Ikha Party took part in the elections, because its leaders had great expectations of achieving power.

The election returns showed that only a slight change in the membership of Parliament had been made. A number of seats were won by the opposition, the Ikha Party, but the majority of deputies were either the personal followers of the Prime Minister or former deputies pledged to support the new Government. It was thus that Prime Minister Shawkat was able to muster a majority of 72—forming a parliamentary bloc—and he declared that since he enjoyed such a majority he would continue in office; and thus his Cabinet ceased to be transitional.

Parliament met on 8 March 1933, and the King read the Speech from the Throne, embodying the Cabinet's programme. The Ikha members violently attacked the programme as devoid of any measures which would transform the administration of the mandatory regime into one fit for a truly independent country. The parliamentary bloc which Shawkat had organized was thus shattered within ten days after Parliament was convened, and the Cabinet was forced to resign. It must also be admitted that King Faysal, who always had a say in cabinet changes, desired a change, and Naji Shawkat, in the face of violent opposition, realized that the time had come to resign. On 18 March he requested the King to relieve him of the seals of office on the grounds of ill health, and the King, thanking him for his earnest efforts and sincere patriotism, accepted his resignation on the same day.

THE IKHA PARTY IN POWER

The doors were thus thrown open for the Ikha leaders to come into power. Faysal had already prepared the way by appointing one of them, Rashid Ali al-Gaylani (lineal descendant of that eleventh-century saint, Shaykh Abd al-Qadir), as Chief of the Royal *Diwan* (Palace). When Naji Shawkat resigned, Faysal invited Rashid Ali to form a new Government. Rashid consulted his Ikha colleagues and decided to accept the offer if he were allowed to negotiate with Britain for the revision of the Treaty of 1930. For the Ikha leaders, it will be remembered, had already pledged the nation never to recognize the treaty as binding if they came to power. King Faysal, who viewed the treaty as a successful bargain with England, was naturally unwilling to accept this condition. A Cabinet crisis developed, but Faysal prevailed over the Ikha leaders by appealing to their sense of patriotism and by pointing out the grave dangers that might ensue to their country if they repudiated a treaty which had just come into force. He deplored that his general lines of policy, which had borne fruition in the independence of Iraq, had not yet been grasped by the Ikha leaders, and went so far as to threaten to abdicate if they failed to appreciate his point of view. The Ikha leaders were so much impressed by the King's arguments that they immediately agreed to form a new Government without making any conditions. In order to escape possible disgrace for so doing, they were allowed to insert the statement in their programme that they would 'endeavour to realize the national aspirations of Iraq', a statement which was vaguely construed to mean the revision of the treaty.

The new Government was formed on 20 March 1933, with Rashid Ali as Prime Minister. Yasin al-Hashimi, leader of the Ikha Party, took the portfolio of Finance, and Hikmat Sulayman was given the Interior. For the continuity of Iraq's foreign policy, General Nuri, upon the request of King Faysal, was given the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Rustum Haydar, former Chief of the Royal *Diwan* and Minister of Finance under General Nuri, was given the portfolio of Communications and Works. The new Government, which included the leaders of opposing parties, was hailed by Naji as-Suwaidi in Parliament on 29 March 1933 as a great success. He welcomed the coalition by quoting the following verse from the *Qur'an*: 'And we will strip off whatever ill-feeling is in their breasts; as brethren one couches face to face.'¹

When Parliament met on 27 March 1933, Rashid Ali announced

¹ *Qur'an*, xv. 46. *Proceedings of the Senate*, Extraordinary Session, 1933, p. 11.

the programme of his Government. With regard to foreign policy, he declared that his Government would 'respect Iraq's international obligations', but pledged that it would 'endeavour to realize the national aspirations' of Iraq. The programme, promising sweeping reforms in every department of Government, stressed the exploitation of Iraq's economic potentialities and the strengthening of the army. It was an ambitious programme, typical of Iraqi practice, but impossible of accomplishment. It was approved by Parliament, but was severely criticized for its foreign policy. The Ikha leaders were reminded that 'only yesterday [they] were complaining of the injustice of the Treaty', and were asked to state their reasons for the change of standpoint. Rashid Ali denied any change in the policy of the Ikha Party and assured his critics that his intention was always to try to revise the treaty.¹

The coming of the Ikha Party into power without a definite promise to revise the treaty led to a rupture of relations between the Ikha and the Watani parties. These two parties had agreed on 23 November 1930 to oppose the ratification of the treaty and committed themselves never to support or join a Government save on the basis of revising the treaty. In spite of the declaration of Rashid Ali that his Government had not given up hope of revising the treaty, the Watani Party, dissatisfied with this pious declaration, issued a manifesto on 9 June 1933 denouncing the Ikha Government.

The loss of prestige sustained by the Ikha Government not only shook the nation's confidence in the party system, but also reopened the old standing Shi'i-Sunni controversy. Disillusioned with the Ikha administration, the Shi'is revived their agitation against what they considered to be the domination of the Sunni minority. Such an attack on the Ikha Government was damaging indeed, and the Ikha leaders could not recover their prestige until August, when they seized upon an incident—the Assyrian affair—which served to focus the attention of a divided nation on an impending 'peril'. The Ikha Party fully exploited the Assyrian incident to its own advantage. Since the King was then on a state visit to England, they were free to deal with the issue in this way. Thus by appearing as heroes who saved their country in time of trouble, the Ikha leaders became national idols.¹ Before discussing this affair, it will be appropriate to describe first Faysal's state visit to England.

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 4th Session, 1933, pp. 31, 35.

² Naji Shawkat, who resigned in favour of an Ikha Government, thought

FAYSAL'S STATE VISIT TO ENGLAND

Shortly after Iraq's rise to statehood, King Faysal was formally invited by King George V to visit England. This visit was designed to cement the friendly relations between Britain and her former ward on the new basis of equality and mutual interests. Faysal left Baghdad on 5 June 1933, and was invited on his way to pay a state visit to Belgium on 15 June.

On 20 June King Faysal, with three of his ministers,¹ arrived in London, and was received with full and impressive ceremonial. King George welcomed him at Victoria station. As the two kings passed through the streets, which were lined with troops, they were cheered by the crowds that had assembled along the route to Buckingham Palace. Shortly after his arrival King Faysal proceeded to lay a wreath of Flanders poppies on the grave of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey.

In the evening King George and the Queen gave a state banquet at Buckingham Palace in King Faysal's honour. After the banquet, the King proposed the health of his guest and said:²

It is with much pleasure, Your Majesty, that I bid you welcome to my capital, and assure you how delighted I am to have this opportunity of renewing our pleasant acquaintanceship of many years' standing.

The Queen and I are happy to be the first to receive Your Majesty as our guest since the historic occasion last year, when Iraq became a member of the League of Nations.

We welcome Your Majesty, not only as the Ruler of a country as rich in the promise of future achievements as in the glories of her illustrious past, but also as an old ally and friend.

I need not assure Your Majesty of the close and sympathetic interest with which I have watched the brilliant advance made by Iraq under Your Majesty's enlightened rule, and it is a pleasure to me to feel that your at the outset that the Assyrian affair was insignificant compared with the Shi'i-Sunni controversy. In the course of a conversation with Colonel R. S. Stafford, Administrative Inspector in Mosul, he discounted the seriousness of the Assyrian incident by saying (June 1933): 'Oh, that is nothing. What really is serious is the Shi'i unrest. Perhaps you are not aware that two of the provinces on the Middle Euphrates are entirely without government and the third and most important, Diwaniyah, though it has the best *Mutasserif* in the country, is only half under control.' See R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1935) p. 162.

¹ The three ministers were General Nuri, Foreign Minister; Yasin al-Hashimi, Minister of Finance; and Rustum Haydar, Minister of Communications and Works. Yasin and Rustum, in the meantime, represented Iraq at the London Economic Conference.

² *The Times*, 21 June 1933, p. 16.

country's progress has been sustained and assisted during the last twelve years by the friendly co-operation of our respective Governments. It is my earnest hope, as I know it to be the wish of Your Majesty, that these close and fruitful relations will be maintained and strengthened in the future, to the enduring advantage of both countries.

I raise my glass to wish Your Majesty all happiness and prosperity, and to assure you of the high regard in which I and my People hold Your Majesty and the historic country over which you rule.

King Faysal, in reply, said:

I thank Your Majesty most sincerely for the kind words with which you have welcomed me once again to the capital of your great Empire, and also for Your Majesty's most gracious appreciation of the progress which has been made by my country during the last twelve years.

I am happy to have this opportunity to express to Your Majesty my own gratitude and the gratitude of the Iraqi nation for the sympathy which Your Majesty has always shown for the welfare of my country, and also to voice my high appreciation of the valuable guidance and assistance which, during the past decade, my country has constantly received from Your Majesty's representatives in Iraq.

It gives me special pleasure to assure Your Majesty of the sincere friendship of the people of Iraq for the people of Great Britain, and I am confident that this friendship will strengthen and deepen with the passage of time.

It is in this firm confidence in the future that I drink to the health and happiness of Your Majesty, of Her Majesty the Queen, and of the Royal Family; to the prosperity of the British Empire and to the strengthening of the bonds of friendship which link our two countries.

On the following day, 21 June, King Faysal and his ministers were entertained at the Guildhall. The Lord Mayor gave a magnificent luncheon party which was attended by King George and Queen Mary. The occasion marked the culmination of the cordial hospitality which was extended to King Faysal. The Lord Mayor, after receiving King Faysal and the Royal Family, gave an address which was later presented to King Faysal, enclosed in a gold casket.¹ After luncheon the Lord Mayor gave the toast of King George and Queen Mary and then proposed 'the King of Iraq'. In the course of his speech he said:¹

It has always been the pride and privilege of the citizens of the capital of the Empire to receive in this ancient and historic Guildhall sovereigns and Queens of other countries, and to welcome them to the City of London. . . .

In welcoming His Majesty the King of Iraq, we are welcoming the ruler of a country in alliance with our own. The close association between our two countries rests, moreover, not only upon the formal provisions of a

¹ For text of the address, see *The Times*, 22 June 1933, p. 11.

treaty, but upon a firm friendship, inspired by mutual respect and identity of interests, which was founded in war and has been sustained and strengthened in peace.

His Majesty is also the Sovereign of what has been aptly described as the newest of States but the most ancient of countries. In the brief span of twelve years, under the wise guidance of His Majesty, a new State and a new nation have been brought into existence, self-reliant, prosperous, and progressive. By that achievement, His Majesty has added yet another illustrious page to the history of a country which has been the source of civilization for half the world, and we feel confident that, under his leadership, Iraq, rich in natural resources and in the sterling qualities of her peoples, will recover, and may even transcend, the great glories of her past.

We hope and trust that the spirit of friendly co-operation which today so happily subsists between Iraq and this country in the realm of politics and of commerce will, under the enlightened rule of His Majesty, be fostered and strengthened to the enduring advantage of both countries.

King Faysal, in reply, expressed his pleasure and great satisfaction at being received as an honoured guest in the City of London.

Among the Arabs [he said] hospitality is esteemed as one of the highest virtues, and if this estimate of its moral value be well founded, then assuredly the City of London must be counted one of the most virtuous as well as one of the richest cities of the world; a combination of qualities which is as rare, perhaps, as that union of thrift and enterprise which has always been the characteristic of the great merchants of this City. You have referred, my Lord Mayor, to the friendship of the people of Great Britain for the people of Iraq, and I am happy to be able to assure you that my people in Iraq most cordially reciprocate this good will. This friendship between the two countries was born out of common sacrifices and has been nourished by the rapid development of mutual interests.

My country has received much help in the past from Great Britain, and looks confidently for further help in the future, and I know that she will not look in vain. We need your help to develop the vast latent resources of our country, and the City of London, the birthplace of so many merchant adventurers, has never failed to appreciate the opportunities which are open to enterprise in distant lands.

The nations of the world are now gathered together in London to seek remedies for their economic ills, and I am confident that they will succeed. I am sure, too, that, with the co-operation of the City, Iraq will be able to make her own contribution to that restoration of commercial prosperity which we all so urgently desire. It is in this spirit of optimism that I raise my glass to drink to the good health and happiness of the Lord Mayor and Corporation and to the glory and prosperity of the wonderful City of London.

King Faysal's state visit formally ended on 22 June, and he left

Buckingham Palace for a hotel in London where he spent a few more days. He was exhausted by overwork and looked very tired during his state visit, and he had planned to spend the summer in Switzerland for reasons of health. But the Assyrian affair, which developed during his absence, not only affected his plans, but also hastened his untimely death.

THE ASSYRIAN AFFAIR

While Faysal was still in London disquieting news reached him about a tension that had developed between the Ikha Government and the Assyrians. He tried to intervene from London and sent cables to his ministers advising them to deal more gently with the Assyrians; but the Ikha leaders, who thought the King had come under the influence of the British Government, would not listen to him. To recover their loss of prestige in the past few months, they seized upon the opportunity by dealing promptly and ruthlessly with the Assyrian 'peril'. They were able to arouse, and then to incite, the indignation of the entire nation against the Assyrians and the British (who were thought to have instigated the Assyrians). While the Ikha Government may not have been directly responsible for the massacre of Assyrians, which was mainly the work of General Bakr Sidqi (officer commanding the Iraqi forces in the north), Hikmat Sulayman, Minister of the Interior, declared to the writer that he had approved the general line of policy which General Bakr adopted.¹

King Faysal, who was ill and needed medical treatment, returned to Baghdad on 2 August, but found the situation completely beyond his control. His intervention, which annoyed his ministers, had a further damaging effect on his health. Demonstrations, spontaneous or inspired, were taking place almost daily demanding the elimination of the entire Assyrian community. In one of the demonstrations outside the Royal *Diwan*, Amir Ghazi (who was in sympathy with the Ikha Government) and the Ikha leaders were loudly cheered by the excited crowds. But there was no reference to King Faysal. Concealing his disgust, Faysal exclaimed at what was going on outside his palace. It is reported to the writer by Ali Jawdat, then Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, that General Nuri, with his characteristic

¹ It is deemed outside the scope of our present study to discuss the Assyrian affair, save in so far as it affected the death of King Faysal; but the reader may be referred to the detailed account given in Stafford, *Tragedy of the Assyrians*.

disapproval of Ikha activities, replied that the whole excitement was 'inspired'.

Nor was this all. It was even hinted that Faysal would abdicate.¹ Certainly his self-respect and dignity had never been so severely wounded. He left Baghdad almost unnoticed on 2 September. Only members of the Cabinet saw him off, but there were hardly more than fifty people at the airport. Two days earlier there had been a crowd of several thousands cheering Amir Ghazi on his return from the ceremonial parade of the northern forces in Mosul. Faysal's tolerant spirit, however, did not let him leave his country without bidding farewell to his people. The following statement was issued on 1 September:

I am leaving Baghdad owing to the necessity for completing my convalescence, and I hope that my absence will not last for more than six weeks. I take this opportunity to express to my people my appreciation of their affection for me and for the manner in which they have maintained peace and confidence among the different sections of the community during recent events. All I have seen of the actions of my nation and Government has strengthened my hopes that we shall attain our national ideals very soon.

Relying on the assistance of Almighty God, I shall continue to do my best to serve my country and nation, notwithstanding any difficulties I may meet.²

DEATH OF FAYSAL AND ACCESSION OF GHAZI

Only six days after Faysal reached Berne he suddenly and unexpectedly died in the early hours of Friday morning, 8 September 1933. He had left Baghdad by air an ailing and tired man, seeking medical treatment in Switzerland. There was then, however, in the opinion of his physician, Dr Alfred Kocher, nothing to suggest the possibility of his sudden death.

The day before his death, on 7 September, Faysal went by motor-car to Interlaken, where he lunched, and was absent from his hotel about five hours. When he returned he appeared very tired. About seven o'clock he complained of palpitation of the heart and the doctor was called. After careful examination, his doctor said that the King was suffering from arteriosclerosis, and that his heart was also in a very feeble condition. This, it was thought, had developed from

¹ In an interview with the writer, Hikmat did not deny the rumour which was set on foot by the Ikha leaders, but stated that, as far as he was concerned, he sent word to King Faysal assuring him of his loyalty to the throne.

² See text in *The Times*, 1 September 1933, p. 11.

worry about events in Iraq. The doctor decided to give him injections, and a nurse was left with him for the night. About 12.30 a.m. Faysal again complained of feeling ill, and his brother, King Ali, who had come with him, and two of his ministers, General Nuri and Rustum Haydar, were called to his bedside. When they arrived Faysal had already breathed his last, and they were unable to see their beloved King alive. General Nuri and Rustum Haydar at once cabled the sad news to Baghdad.

On Friday morning, 8 September, the people of Baghdad awoke to learn the news of Faysal's tragic death, and they were stunned. They soon realized how ungrateful they had been to a monarch who had given his life for his country. No one, was the unanimous opinion, could replace Faysal.

The Cabinet held a meeting immediately after the news was received, and two hours later Amir Ghazi, King Faysal's only son, who was acting as Regent during his father's absence, was sworn in before the members of the Cabinet and proclaimed King Ghazi I. Early in the afternoon the young King drove in procession through lines of Iraqi soldiers, along the capital's main street, from the royal residence to the royal palace, where he received homage from notables and representatives of the various sections of the people.

King George V addressed the following message to King Ghazi:

The Queen and I have learned with profound regret of the sudden and unexpected death of your illustrious father, His Majesty King Faysal, whom we so recently had the pleasure of welcoming as our guest, and we would ask Your Majesty to accept our heartfelt condolences on the grievous loss which you and your Royal House and people have sustained through this melancholy event.

At the same time I take the pleasure in offering to Your Majesty my cordial congratulations on your accession to the Throne, together with my heartiest good wishes for the happiness and prosperity of your reign.¹

King Ghazi sent the following reply:

I and the Royal House are deeply touched with the sympathetic message in which Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen have so heartily expressed your condolences on the tragic death of my august father. I pray the Almighty to bestow upon Your Majesty, Her Majesty the Queen, and the members of your noble family the blessings of long life and happiness, and upon your people continued welfare. I thank Your Majesty most sincerely for your cordial congratulations on my accession, and earnestly

¹ *The Times*, 9 September 1933, p. 10.

hope that the friendly relations which have happily existed in the reign of my father will be yet strengthened in the days to come.¹

At Berne the body of King Faysal was embalmed and the coffin, taken to Brindisi, was carried on board H.M.S. *Dispatch*, which arrived at Haifa on 14 September. Thousands of people had gathered, and excited persons cried 'Allah! Allah!' when the coffin was seen. An R.A.F. aeroplane left Haifa with the coffin for Baghdad and it arrived early on 15 September, where it was met by King Ghazi and the Royal bodyguard.

The funeral procession, which was worthy of a national hero, was such as had rarely been seen for any previous Arab king. The coffin was carried to the Royal *Diwan*, and with the procession marched thousands of mourners. From the Royal *Diwan* the coffin, covered in front with a large portrait of Faysal and draped in crêpe, was carried to the tomb at Adhamiyah. On the tomb a magnificent building was later erected which became the royal mausoleum of the Kingdom.

FALL OF THE IKHA GOVERNMENT

Upon the accession of King Ghazi, Rashid Ali, in accordance with constitutional practice, tendered his resignation on 9 September. King Ghazi invited him to form a new Cabinet on the same day. After Faysal's death Rashid Ali had been attacked by a number of leading politicians for the anti-British feeling he had aroused during the Assyrian affair. To appease his critics, in a speech made on the occasion of his reinstallation as Prime Minister, Rashid Ali declared that the policy of his Government would be the same as that followed by the late King Faysal; and in the meantime he made a statement to the correspondent of *The Times* on 10 September 1933, assuring the British Government of his friendly attitude, in which he said:²

The policy of Iraq under the new King would be the same as that pursued under the leadership of his revered father, the guiding motive being the maintenance of the friendship and alliance with her great ally, Great Britain. That was the policy already approved by the present Parliament and would remain unchanged.

Rashid Ali's declarations, which were intended merely for foreign consumption, produced a violent reaction among his Ikha colleagues, who feared that the Government might repudiate its former policy.

¹ ibid. 11 September 1933, p. 10.

² ibid. 13 September 1933, p. 12.

In the meantime the Watani Party, which had already attacked the Ikha leaders for compromising their party principles, seized upon the opportunity and issued a manifesto on 11 September 1933, in which the policy of Rashid Ali was denounced as 'reactionary' and inimical to the national interests.

Confronted with such opposition, Rashid Ali decided to improve the Government's position by dissolving Parliament and holding new elections. This step, which was meant to strengthen the position of the Ikha Government, proved disastrous to it. The King, advised by Rashid Ali's opponents against indulging his pro-Ikha sympathies, refused to approve Rashid Ali's request for dissolution. Hikmat Sulayman, Minister of Interior, and Muhammad Zaki, Minister of Justice, resigned in protest. To maintain the party's solidarity Rashid Ali presented his resignation to the King on 28 October 1933, and it was immediately accepted.

MIDFA'I'S FIRST AND SECOND CABINETS

Ali Jawdat, Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, made it possible for Jamil al-Midfa'i,¹ a non-partisan ex-minister, to form a new Government on 9 November 1933. Midfa'i's Cabinet was the first of a series to be formed on purely personal rather than partisan lines. It comprised General Nuri and Rustum Haydar (for Foreign Affairs and Public Works), representing one faction, and Naji Shawkat and Nasrat al-Farisi (for Interior and Finance) representing another. Midfa'i, who did not believe in party politics, declared on 14 December 1933, at a party given to prospective supporters, that he needed no partisan support since he enjoyed the confidence of the leading members of Parliament.

Hardly had the new Government begun to work, however, than the Nuri-Rustum and Shawkat-Farisi factions opposed each other and wrecked any constructive work that might have been done. It is reported that the Minister of Interior, who had control of the press, induced a number of venal writers to abuse his colleague, the Minister of Public Works, in the most vulgar terms.² Matters came to a head on the question of the Gharraf project. Rustum Haydar, as Minister

¹ Ali Jawdat and Jamil al-Midfa'i began their public life as two army officers who took part in the Arab Revolt of 1916, and later served under Faysal in Syria. On the establishment of the Iraqi Government in 1921, they returned to Iraq and took active part in politics.

² See a statement by Yasin al-Hashimi in the Chamber of Deputies to this effect, *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 4th Session, 1933, p. 204.

of Public Works, undertook to carry out the project in order to make possible the irrigation of a vast area around Gharraf, in lower Iraq, by constructing a dam on the Tigris. The project, which had already been approved by the Cabinet, was later opposed by the Shawkat-Farisi faction on the grounds of lack of resources, and they suggested postponement of the whole work. Rustum's enthusiasm for the project was shared by the Minister of Education, Salih Jabr; but these two men, who belonged to the Shi'i community, were accused of supporting the project because they were Shi'i, since the beneficiaries of the project would be members of that community. Rustum, supported by Salih, threatened to resign; and when Midfa'i failed to reconcile the two factions, he tendered his resignation on 10 February 1934.

The King reinvited Midfa'i to form a new Government. Dropping the two opposing factions, Midfa'i reconstructed his Cabinet on 21 February 1934. But the new Government, which was mainly recruited from the least influential public men, proved to be too weak to command respect or to inaugurate any constructive work. There had already been a noticeable deterioration in administration, which was indeed due to the relaxation of Government control in the post-mandate period, but for which the Midfa'i Government was mainly made responsible. Dissatisfied with the conduct of the Midfa'i Government, the King expressed his desire for a Cabinet change. Midfa'i immediately tendered his resignation on 25 August 1934.

THE ALI JAWDAT CABINET

On the fall of Midfa'i, Ali Jawdat, Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, seized the opportunity to succeed him as Prime Minister on 27 August 1934. In addition to the Premiership, Ali Jawdat kept for himself the portfolio of the Interior and offered that of Defence to Midfa'i. General Nuri was given Foreign Affairs, and three months later, on 25 November 1934, Rustum Haydar was appointed Chief of the Royal *Diwan*. It was thus that Ali Jawdat secured for his Cabinet not only the support of General Nuri's group but also maintained his close friendship with Midfa'i.

On 30 August Ali Jawdat announced his policy, which was, in fact, a modest programme of reform, and on 4 September the King approved his request to dissolve Parliament. Such a request, it will be recalled, was denied to the Ikha Government and led to its fall in October 1933. Ali Jawdat, then Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, was at

that time accused of advising the King against dissolution.¹ It is indeed to this very fact that we should trace the initial trouble which Ali Jawdat faced as Premier, because the Ikha Party at once began to attack his Cabinet for dissolving Parliament when he had so ardently opposed its dissolution under an Ikha Government. When asked by the present writer for an explanation, Ali Jawdat prudently but apologetically replied that a year had elapsed since Rashid Ali asked for dissolution, and that the country needed urgent reform which necessitated consulting the electorate. This pretext of appealing directly to the electorate had often been given to justify resort to dissolution. But when analysed in the light of continued rigid control of the elections, it is clear that dissolutions hardly meant anything save the replacement of opposing members of Parliament by others from among the Government's friends and supporters.

The manner in which the elections were carried out gave ample grounds for criticism. Ali Jawdat, retorting to the criticism levelled against him in the Senate, declared that he had followed 'the same procedure as in former elections';² but the way in which these new elections were held was probably still more authoritarian, so much so that the Ikha Party was hardly given more than twelve seats in the lower House. Former elections, it is true, had often been carried out merely to fill the Chamber with nominees of the Cabinet's own supporters. But political circles were always critical of elections if the Government failed to include a number of its political opponents; more critical, indeed, when persons of considerable political importance were deliberately excluded from the Government's choice. Such persons, when omitted, were powerful enough to embarrass the party in power. The Ali Jawdat Government ignored this and created what was denounced as the least representative Chamber Iraq ever had. Among Ali Jawdat's mistakes was the exclusion of Abd al-Wahid Sikkar from the list of nominees. Abd al-Wahid, who distinguished himself in the Iraq revolt of 1920, was one of the influential tribal shaykhs of the Diwaniyah *liwa*, and, as a chief of the Fatlah tribes, viewed his exclusion from Parliament as a great humiliation. He proved to be the most embarrassing opponent to the Government. Furthermore, a number of city-dwellers (mainly from Baghdad) were elected deputies for tribal districts in Diwaniyah and

¹ See a statement by Muhsin Abu-Tabikh in the Senate, *Proceedings of the Senate*, 10th Session, 1935, p. 11.

² See *Proceedings of the Senate*, 11th Session, 1935, pp. 11-13.

Muntafiq, which meant a reduction in the number of tribal shaykhs in Parliament. Since those city-dwellers were Sunnis, though they were elected on purely political or personal grounds, their election was construed by the Shi'is as prejudicial to the interests of the Shi'i Middle Euphrates districts. The Ikha Party, likewise, with only twelve seats out of eighty-eight, found itself outnumbered in a Parliament crowded with Government supporters.

Ali Jawdat's handling of the elections might not have aroused such criticism if the general situation in the country were satisfactory. The Cabinet, indeed, had inherited negligence and growing dissatisfaction in Government administration after the termination of the mandate, which inevitably resulted from frequent Cabinet changes and the increasing transfer and appointment of Government officials on political grounds.¹ Such deterioration in the administrative system had been recognized by the Government and efforts were made to improve it; but the Ikha Party, focusing its attack on Ali Jawdat, made him the scapegoat for the whole situation.² When Parliament met on 29 December 1934, the Ikha members, led by Yasin al-Hashimi and Rashid Ali, levelled a sharp attack on the way in which the elections were carried out. In the reply to the Speech from the Throne, the Senate formally expressed its verdict against the dissolution of Parliament and criticized the elections as having been 'carried out according to well-known special procedure'.³ There was considerable hostility to Government in the Senate, but, according to the constitution, the upper House could not overthrow the Cabinet if it enjoyed the confidence of the lower House. In fact Parliament, since the elections had been controlled by the Government, failed to offer a peaceful channel for Cabinet changes. Opposition in the press and in Baghdad political circles, denouncing the 'tyranny' of the Ali Jawdat Government, was easily met by rigid censorship and counter-propaganda. It was soon realized by the Ikha Party that its peaceful agitation against the Government was of no practical value.

TRIBAL UPRISEINGS IN THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES

Failure to achieve immediate results in the towns inspired the Ikha leaders to exploit the grievances of the tribes. The ingenious

¹ See a statement by Shaykh Muhammad Rida ash-Shabibi in the Chamber of Deputies on 3 January 1935, *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 5th Session, 1935, p. 9.

² See a statement by Rashid Ali in the Senate on 3 January 1935, *Proceedings of the Senate*, 11th Session, 1935, p. 12. ³ *ibid.* pp. 5-6.

idea of arousing the tribes against the Government was suggested by Hikmat Sulayman. In December 1934 Hikmat often gave dinner parties to leading Ikha members at his house in Sulaykh, situated to the north of Baghdad. These parties were turned after dinner into secret meetings, and the vigilant and restless Ikha leaders broached the idea of raising tribal revolts against the central authority. Yasin al-Hashimi, leader of the Ikha Party, was at the outset not very enthusiastic and absented himself from the Sulaykh meetings. He saw, perhaps, the futility of opposing the Government by such means, and he was personally still on good terms with Ali Jawdat. When, however, Rashid and Hikmat, who had great influence in the Diwaniyah and Diyala tribes, were successfully proceeding with their plans, Yasin was finally prevailed upon to participate actively in the Ikha plot.

The Sulaykh gatherings culminated in a meeting held in Rashid Ali's house, also situated in Sulaykh, on 7 December 1934, when the Ikha leaders pledged themselves in a written document to take a joint action against the Government. The document, which was held to be as binding as the *Qur'an* and was called by Hikmat the 'Holy Bible', stated that no Ikha member should accept any offer from, or come to terms with, the Government until Ali Jawdat was overthrown.

The Sulaykh plot was carried out in Diwaniyah by Abd al-Wahid Sikkar. Abd al-Wahid was a long-standing member of the Ikha Party and had distinguished himself as a national leader in the revolt of 1920 against the British administration. His wealth and prestige had been greatly enhanced by his political activities, but his ambition had also drawn him into land disputes with his neighbouring tribal shaykhs. Ali Jawdat, in order to curb Abd al-Wahid's influence, was inclined to settle the land disputes in favour of Abd al-Wahid's neighbours; but this obviously increased Abd al-Wahid's eagerness to overthrow the Ali Jawdat Government and to help the Ikha Party to achieve power. Although Abd al-Wahid's personal influence was confined to Diwaniyah, he was able to extend it to the entire Shi'i community of the Middle Euphrates by championing their rights and interests, and he demanded immediate reforms from the Government.

Abd al-Wahid's rationalization of his political motives as championing the Shi'i cause reopened the whole question of Sunni-Shi'i relations. Since the matter was deemed to be essentially religious, the Shi'i leaders decided to refer it to the chief Shi'i divine of Najaf, Shaykh Muhammad Kashif al-Ghita'. Abd al-Wahid, Muhsin Abu-

Tabikh, and Alwan al-Yasiri (who acted as liaison officers between the Ikha Party and the Shi'i tribal community) addressed a letter to Shaykh Ghita' on 9 January 1935, requesting him to call a conference of tribal Shaykhs in Najaf, presided over by Ghita' himself, in order to discuss the question of reforms in the Middle Euphrates districts. The conference was held on 11 January and the principal Shi'i claims were discussed. Abd al-Wahid and the other Ikha shaykhs were more interested in attaining immediate political results than in achieving reforms. They accordingly argued that reforms could only be introduced after the overthrow of the Ali Jawdat Cabinet. After a long and protracted discussion the conference decided to present a petition to the King in which it was stated: (1) the present Cabinet should resign in favour of one more representative of the people; (2) Parliament should be dissolved, since the last elections were not properly carried out; (3) the laws should be respected and properly applied.

With this petition in hand, the tribal shaykhs proceeded to Baghdad and requested an audience with the King on 14 January. They complained against the Government and requested its removal. But no change in Government was yet in sight.

Meanwhile the situation in the Diwaniyah deteriorated and arms were sold and carried more frequently than ever. Tribal war-dances manifesting hostility to the Government were reported to Baghdad with increasing frequency. The rebellion had become more serious in February, and it spread over the whole area south of Hillah.

Nor was this all. The Ikha leaders were in the meanwhile engaged in inciting other tribal shaykhs in the north to stage a similar revolt against the Government. When Ali Jawdat contemplated putting down these revolts by force, Hikmat advised his friend General Bakr Sidqi, officer commanding the northern forces, not to lend active support to the Government.

Matters came to a head when eleven out of the twenty senators boycotted the meetings of their House while the tribal rebellion was raging in the Middle Euphrates. Faced with a hostile Senate and his inability to cope with the revolt, Ali Jawdat tendered his resignation on 23 February 1935.

IV

TRIAL AND ERROR IN SELF-GOVERNMENT II

1932-6

THE Ikha leaders were now invited to form a Government, but they refused unless the Ali Jawdat Parliament were dissolved. To this the King would not agree, and he asked Jamil al-Midfa'i to form a Government on 4 March 1935.

No sooner had Midfa'i assumed office than Abd al-Wahid openly denounced the new Government. With his eye on an Ikha Government, he declared he was not satisfied with a Prime Minister who was suspected to be the protégé of Ali Jawdat. Revolt spread like wild-fire. Abd al-Wahid's Fatlah tribesmen cut roads and destroyed bridges on the Euphrates between Faysaliyah and Abu-Sukhayr, and closed the main route between Diwaniyah and Najaf. The Agra' tribesmen, led by Shaykh Sha'lan al-Atiyah, joined hands with Abd al-Wahid and took control of a Government centre situated sixty miles south of Hillah. In the Diyala district similar troubles occurred among the Azzah tribesmen, led by Shaykh Habib al-Khayzuran. Midfa'i's Cabinet, earnestly trying to avoid a clash with the tribes, sent only three battalions to the area of the disturbances as a show of force. But the Government's plan was soon known and the revolt became increasingly difficult to control.

In the meantime Abd al-Wahid approached Shaykh Kashif al-Ghita', who had already taken part in formulating Shi'i demands, for further support against the Government. But Shaykh al-Ghita' was at the same time approached by a number of non-Ikha tribal shaykhs, advising him to denounce Abd al-Wahid's movement since it was inspired by selfish motives. The venerable shaykh was indeed in a very embarrassing position. He was fully aware of Abd al-Wahid's political motives, but he could not turn down an appeal in favour of Shi'i rights. Thereupon, the shaykh, while not committing himself to any political faction, confined his activities to espousing Shi'i rights. A list of reforms was drawn up, which was never officially presented to Midfa'i, but was privately circulated and caused further

trouble to him. When Midfa'i resigned and the list was officially presented to the Ikha Government, it lacked the signature of Abd al-Wahid.¹

Failing to achieve its objective by a display of force, the Government decided to negotiate with the rebels. Neither direct negotiations nor an appeal to the Ikha leaders to offer their good offices in the interests of the country helped to restore the situation to normal. The Ikha leaders, while they denied any complicity with the rebellion, declined to denounce its leaders publicly. This prompted Midfa'i to resort to force to crush the rebellion. The Government, moreover, passed a resolution, subject to the approval of the King, to the effect that any person suspected of threatening public safety was to be arrested.² This measure might have helped to check the rebellion if it had been introduced earlier, but it was adopted too late to ease the situation. When the Chief of the General Staff, General Taha al-Hashimi, was instructed to send reinforcements against the rebels, he reported that the Government's forces were not strong enough to cope with the situation. He stated, likewise, that since the rebellion was raised on partisan grounds, a political rather than military solution should be sought. The sincerity of General Hashimi's advice was seriously questioned, since he was the brother of Yasin, leader of the Ikha Party, and was therefore not in favour of a military conflict with the tribes for the sake of Midfa'i. General Hashimi's integrity might not have been questioned, if he had not himself taken a firm stand against subsequent tribal rebellions which arose against a Government headed by none other than his brother Yasin.³

The attitude of the Senate remained adamant against Midfa'i—the eleven senators continued to absent themselves and thus blocked legislation by Parliament. Like Ali Jawdat, faced with a hostile Senate, unable to crush the rebellion by force, and with a lack of initial resolve to deal with the trouble effectively, Midfa'i resigned on 16 March 1935, having remained in power only thirteen days.

¹ The list of Shi'i demands was on the whole reasonable; it included such items as the increase of Shi'i deputies to be proportionate to Shi'i population in the country, the appointment of Shi'i judges, freedom of elections in the Shi'i *liwas*, freedom of the press, and reduction of taxes.

² The Midfa'i Cabinet was planning to arrest the principal Ikha leaders who were suspected of being in league with the rebels, but the Cabinet resigned before it was able to carry this decree into effect.

³ For text of an apologetic letter by General Hashimi defending his position, see Abd ar-Razzaq al-Hasani, *Tarikh al-Wazarat al-Iraqiyah* (Sidon, 1940) vol. 4, pp. 46–8,

THE IKHA PARTY IN POWER

Midfa'i's fall, which demonstrated that no grouping other than the Ikha could restore order, left the King with no other choice but to invite Yasin al-Hashimi, leader of the Ikha Party, to form a Government on his own terms. The new Ikha Government, which took office on 17 March 1935, sought the co-operation of General Nuri as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and General Ja'far al-Askari, a former Prime Minister and brother-in-law of General Nuri, as Minister of Defence. These two able ministers were included as a leavening in an Ikha Government and in order to ensure continuity in Anglo-Iraqi relations; Yasin shrewdly preferred to have them in his Government rather than to risk their possible opposition if left outside. The portfolios of Finance and Education were given to two Shi'i Ikha members, Ra'uf al-Bahrani and Shayk Muhammad Ridha ash-Shabibi. The portfolio of Communications and Works was given to a Kurd, Muhammad Amin Zaki.

Yasin, however, was unable to reconcile the desires of his two formidable Ikha colleagues, Rashid Ali and Hikmat Sulayman, who were both keenly interested in the portfolio of Interior. Hikmat, who flattered himself that he was the chief author of the Sulaykh plot, claimed priority; but Yasin, suspecting Hikmat's intimate relations with Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, former leader of the Watani Party, preferred to offer Hikmat the portfolio of Finance. Hikmat, who refused the office, in an interview with the present writer stated that Abu 't-Timman had advised him against accepting it. The Ikha Party suspected Hikmat's insistence on the Interior, with its control of the press and police departments, as a means to give Abu 't-Timman and his followers a free hand to propagate their 'Communist' ideas.¹ Yasin's initial failure to include Hikmat in his Cabinet proved to be a great blunder since Hikmat, with his genius for clandestine intrigues, eventually succeeded in overthrowing the Yasin-Rashid administration by force.

The new Cabinet, which included the leading Ikha leaders as well as Generals Nuri and Ja'far, was hailed as a strong Government. It is true that Hikmat's exclusion was regretted, but this was probably not regarded as a serious threat to the Government. The Ali Jawdat-Midfa'i group, which had already been weakened as a result of the

¹ See Muhsin Abu-Tabikh, *al-Mabadi wa al-Rijal* (Damascus, 1938). For the rise of socialism in Iraq see Chapter V.

Diwaniyah uprisings, was carefully watched. It was then deplored that the Ikha Party had achieved power only through illegal means, but it was hoped that the disturbances might come to an end since the chief instigators had got what they wanted. The Ikha leaders, however, paid heavily for their own sins when they themselves were later faced with similar uprisings. It was, indeed, not a difficult task to incite the tribes to revolt, for they were habitually prepared to rise against authority; but it was extremely difficult to control them once such a movement was set in motion.

CONTINUED UPRISINGS IN THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES

Following the formation of his Cabinet, Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi issued a proclamation to the tribes (18 March 1935) calling them to lay down their arms, and pledged himself to 'apply the laws of the land according to justice'. Abd al-Wahid immediately withdrew from the area of disorder and thus seemed to have been actuated merely by party considerations. During April he and his tribal shaykhs were seen driving with their arms in the main street of Baghdad, giving the obvious impression that the Ikha leaders owed their elevation to power to them. The tribal shaykhs remained in the capital throughout the month, being entertained at parties given by the Ikha leaders, but their main objective was to realize their personal interests and enhance their prestige in the eyes of their own tribesmen.

Abd al-Wahid, satisfied with an Ikha Government in power, no longer talked of Shi'i rights. But his attitude immediately aroused his tribal opponents who denounced him as a 'hypocrite' who sought the realization of his own personal ambition to the detriment of the interests of the Shi'i community. Those tribal shaykhs whose interests and prestige were undermined by Abd al-Wahid's successful revolt began to move against the Ikha Government in the same way as Abd al-Wahid had revolted against Midfa'i. They appealed to Shaykh Kashif al-Ghita' to resume his demands of Shi'i rights as embodied in their petition, signed by all tribal shaykhs except Abd al-Wahid.

The Yasin-Rashid Government tried to induce Shaykh Ghita' to placate the tribal shaykhs by promising them to carry out reforms throughout the whole country. The venerable shaykh was thus inevitably driven into a political dispute in which he was unwilling to take a part. If he intervened on behalf of the Government, giving satisfaction to Abd al-Wahid and his followers, he would antagonize the other tribal shaykhs whom he had already supported on the

question of Shi'i rights. Shaykh Ghita', accordingly, was bound to reply to the Government in a general way that he was not trying to arouse any sectarian feeling against it, while he advised the tribal shaykhs to keep Shi'i rights in mind, but refrained from inciting them to revolt. He issued a pious and ambiguous declaration in which he called his people to maintain order, but warned them from giving support to any political party, 'since political parties proved to be a drug to the West and a disease to the East'. He also warned them against falling under the influence of leaders whose sole interests were to achieve power while the mass of the people would remain poor and wretched.¹ The shaykh immediately afterwards withdrew from the picture, leaving the matter to lesser religious leaders who played an important role in stirring up trouble. The Yasin-Rashid Government, nevertheless, continued to suspect the hidden hand of the shaykh, while in fact these minor religious leaders were under the influence of rival politicians and played almost the same role as those Ikha leaders who had aroused the tribes against the Ali Jawdat and Midfa'i Governments.²

Early in May a serious rebellion started, led by Shaykh Khawwam, chief of the Banu Izrayj tribe. He was, it is true, inspired to revolt by the Baghdad politicians; but he also feared lest the Ikha Government would reopen a land dispute in which he was involved and effect a settlement against him. He started his revolt at Rumaythah, situated on the railroad between Baghdad and Basrah, and famous as the hotbed of the Iraqi revolt of 1920 against the British administration. The immediate cause of the revolt was, indeed, a trifling incident. On 6 May 1935 a certain Shi'i divine, Shaykh Ahmad Asad-Allah, was arrested on the grounds of stirring up hostility against the Government. The arrest immediately aroused Khawwam's tribesmen to revolt. Defying authority, they destroyed the railway line and occupied the *serai* (Government building) of Rumaythah. Khawwam was prompted to revolt when intelligence reached him that his movement would be supported by other uprisings of the Afaj and Banu Huchaym tribes. But his initial blunder was that he raised the revolt before he was assured of effective support.

¹ For text of the declaration see al-Hasani, op. cit. vol. 4, p. 76. See also A. D. MacDonald, 'The Political Development in Iraq leading up to the Rising in the Spring of 1935', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. 23 (Jan. 1936) p. 32.

² *Proceedings of the Senate*, Extraordinary Session, 1935, pp. 9, 11.

The Government's reaction to the uprising was quick and firm. An army was immediately dispatched under the command of General Bakr Sidqi, who had distinguished himself as an able commander during the Assyrian uprising, and the operations against the rebels were ruthlessly conducted. Martial law was proclaimed and the rebels were called upon to surrender before fighting started. Shaykh Khawwam refused to submit, and Bakr proceeded to launch his attack with determination. Bombing from the air, especially at the centre where Khawwam was stationed, wrought havoc with the rebels, and most of them were forced to fly in panic. When completely surrounded, Khawwam fled across the river to an estate friendly to the Government where he was to enjoy but momentary asylum. He was captured by his enemies and handed over to General Bakr. On 16 May the army entered Rumaythah and the uprising came to an end. Khawwam's property was confiscated and he was sentenced to life-imprisonment.

The celerity and ruthlessness with which Bakr had put down the rebellion alarmed and dissuaded other expectant tribes from joining forces with Khawwam. The Government, it is true, was in the meantime conducting negotiations with the Shaykhs of Dhawalim and Albu-Hasan tribes who, otherwise, would have supported Khawwam and prolonged unnecessary suffering for their tribesmen. But Bakr's quick victories prevented the spread of the rebellion.

There was another uprising going on at Muntafiq and Suq ash-Shuyukh while General Bakr was suppressing Khawwam's rebellion. The Government garrisons at Ur and Suq ash-Shuyukh were forced to surrender, the railway line was cut, and the *serai* was looted. General Bakr, soon after he captured Rumaythah, proceeded southward to Muntafiq. Before he reached the area of rebellion, the tribesmen, partly from fear but mainly as a result of negotiation with the Government, declared their loyalty and offered to repair the railway line which they had cut between Nasiriyah and Ur. General Bakr's mission, accordingly, was reduced merely to restoring order to that area. Bakr, however, had to proceed to Suq ash-Shuyukh where another uprising was still raging. Floods slowed down his movement, but he managed to dispatch forces by the Tigris, and aerial bombardment completely paralysed any serious resistance. The army finally entered Suq ash-Shuyukh on 1 June 1935, and the leaders of the rebellion were arrested. A court martial found more than 150 persons, including a number of Government officials,

directly connected with the uprising. Nine of them were sentenced to death and the others were imprisoned for terms ranging from three years to hard labour for life.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND THE NEW ELECTIONS

The coming of the Ikha Party into power coincided with the adjournment of Parliament; but the Ikha leaders, who had bitterly complained of the Ali Jawdat elections, had made up their minds on dissolution. A royal *iradah* was issued on 9 April 1935, dissolving Parliament on the grounds that 'the present situation demands such co-operation between the Legislature and the Executive as to enable the latter to carry out important reforms'. Such 'co-operation' between the Legislature and the Executive, the lack of which was often given as a pretext for dissolution, had virtually led to the domination of the Legislature by the Executive.

Before the Government proceeded to hold new elections, the leading Ikha ministers decided to dissolve their own party. Such a decision, it seems, was inspired partly by the decline of the party system itself, but mainly by Yasin's desire to have a free hand in the conduct of public affairs. Since the whole party system was tottering, the dissolution of the Ikha Party aroused little criticism.¹

Preparations for the general elections were made early in June, but the final elections were not completed before 4 August 1935. The number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies was increased from 88 to 108 since the population of Iraq, the Government declared, had increased. While this arrangement afforded the Government an opportunity to distribute seats among a larger number of supporters and influential persons who might cause trouble, the decision was not based on a new census which might have justified it. The tribal shaykhs were more fairly represented than in previous elections, and a number of editors of the Baghdad daily papers were returned as deputies. The increase in the tribal representation reflected the growing influence of the tribal shaykhs following the uprisings in the Middle Euphrates; but this increase, as was rightly pointed out, merely meant unqualified support for the Government owing to the ignorance, and even the illiteracy, of the majority of the tribal shaykhs. It was also regretted that the leading editors of the daily papers were given seats in Parliament, for their recruitment as deputies caused

¹ [Rafael Buttil], 'al-Hashimi and his Great Experiment', *al-Bilad* (Baghdad) 2 May 1935.

them to support the Government, so that the nation was deprived of the benefit of their criticism.¹

On 4 July 1935, one month before the general elections were completed, the Government announced its policy, which embodied, as usual, an ambitious programme of reform.² It promised general and sweeping reforms in all Government departments. Special mention was made of an amendment of the Electoral Law, the enactment of a law for trade unions, the reorganization of the municipal and local Governments, the reorganization and expansion of the army, and the establishment of a national bank. Mention was also made of raising the standard of living of the tribal population with a view to their eventual settlement and their accommodation to agriculture and industry.³

On 8 August 1935 the new Parliament met and elected Muhammad Zaki, Minister of Justice, President of the Chamber of Deputies, and Muhammad as-Sadr, President of the Senate. In his Speech from the Throne the King reviewed the events which led up to the formation of the new Government and urged stability and constructive work.⁴

In the debate on the King's Speech the secret meetings at Sulaykh were mentioned for the first time. Senator Midfa'i, whose Cabinet had just been overthrown as a result of the Diwaniyah uprising, made a statement on 15 August in which he accused Rashid Ali, Minister of the Interior, as the chief leader who had organized the Sulaykh meetings and incited the tribes to revolt. Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi, in defending his Minister of the Interior, replied in like manner by accusing Senator Midfa'i of inciting subsequent tribal uprisings against the Government.⁵ It is significant that such accusations and counter-accusations, if made in normal circumstances, might have led to extensive legal investigations; but since both the ministers and their opponents were probably equally guilty, each faction felt quite satisfied by registering a protest.

During its short extraordinary sitting (August–September), Parliament passed a law of general amnesty on 7 September which pardoned

¹ *al-Islah*, 10 August 1935; and *as-Sarkha*, 10 September 1935.

² See text in *al-Bilad*, 5 July 1935.

³ For an apologia of the economic and financial policy of the Government by its Minister of Finance, see Ra'uf al-Bahrani, *The Sound Financial Policy of the Second Hashimi Cabinet* (Damascus, 1938). (In Arabic.)

⁴ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 6th (Extraordinary) Session, 1935, pp. 1–2.

⁵ *Proceedings of the Senate*, Extraordinary Session, 1935, pp. 9–11.

all those who took part in the Middle Euphrates uprisings. By this measure the Government sought to placate the entire Middle Euphrates area; but it was regretted that the pardon, for purely political reasons, included persons who had committed criminal acts both in the Middle Euphrates and the Kurdish districts. Parliament likewise passed a law (29 August) which empowered the Government to dismiss or put on the retired list any Government officials who lacked efficiency or integrity. In practice, however, this law afforded the Government an opportunity to replace those officials whose loyalty was doubtful by others who were friends or supporters of the leading ministers.¹ The action taken by the Yasin-Rashid administration to rid the country of inefficient officials may be justified on the grounds that a considerable number of officials had been appointed or promoted for purely political considerations. Such officials, encouraged by frequent Cabinet changes, took sides with prospective ministers. When these ministers achieved power, their friends were amply rewarded. Such a spoils system, needless to say, had a very damaging effect on the efficiency and morale of Government administration. In 1931 General Nuri, then Prime Minister, dismissed a number of inefficient officials, but most of them were later reappointed on personal and political grounds. The spoils system had become so deep-rooted that the Yasin-Rashid administration, if it aimed at reform at all, could obviously do very little to improve the situation.

Under the Yasin-Rashid administration, Parliament passed over a hundred new laws which covered various phases of the country's life. One of them was for the establishment of an agricultural bank; another for the regulation and protection of labour; and still another for the stimulation of local industries. The National Conscription Law, which was passed under the Midfa'i administration in 1934, was revised and enforced in 1935. Finally, a law abolishing the time-honoured titles of Pasha, Beg, and Effendi, which were inherited from the Ottoman empire, was passed on 4 April 1936. Every citizen became a Sayyid, a word equivalent to Mr, without distinction. While the people continued to use titles in everyday speech, the law was enforced in respect of all official correspondence.

FURTHER UPRISINGS

Five further uprisings took place under the Yasin-Rashid administration. They arose either in protest against the Ikha leaders them-

¹ See a statement to this effect made by Midfa'i in the Senate, *Proceedings of the Senate*, Extraordinary Session, 1935, p. 78.

selves or as a result of long-standing grievances against the central administration. Of the latter type was the Barzan uprising of Zibar, in Kurdistan, which took place in August 1935. The Kurds, who are racially different from the Arab majority, had long complained of discrimination against them and had agitated for decentralization; but their complaint could hardly be justified, for the southern Arab areas, which are as poor and backward as the Kurdish, have been just as badly neglected and misgoverned by the central Government. The short-sightedness of the Iraqi Government in handling Kurdish affairs was reflected by their merely crushing such revolts by force, and punishing or bribing the leaders; thus the masses were left for ever dissatisfied. Such handling of the situation obviously offered opportunities for adventurers to assume leadership of the malcontent Kurds, and thus the revolts often recurred. The Zibar uprising was no exception to the rule: the dissatisfied Barzans were led by a certain Khalil Khoshawi, who started his rebellion by raiding and plundering a number of neighbouring villages. Owing to the mountainous nature of the area and its nearness to Turkey, it took the Iraqi Government, in co-operation with the Turkish Government, several months before the rebellion was completely put down in March 1936.

The next uprising, which also took place in the north, was quite different in nature from its predecessor. The Yazidis, whose peculiar religion seems to others to require them to pay homage to the Devil (hence their name, the Devil Worshippers), were not well disposed to national conscription. They petitioned the Government for exemption from military service on the grounds that their religion would not permit them to fight, and that they had already been exempt from military service under the Ottoman administration. The Iraqi Government, fearful lest this exemption would constitute a precedent for other religious groups or communities, paid no attention to the Yazidi request. The Yazidis, accordingly, led by Da'ud ad-Da'ud, defied authority and refused to submit to conscription. The Government, suspecting that the rebellion was inspired by its opponents, decided to crush it by force. It did not take long before the revolt was completely crushed, in October 1935, and the Yazidis submitted to national conscription. Da'ud fled to Syria, but the other ringleaders were arrested, tried by a court martial, and hanged. This poor and primitive community, already on its way to extinction, should have been treated more leniently by the Yasin-Rashid administration, since the majority of the Yazidis are so ignorant and harmless.

that they could hardly have constituted a threat to the central authority.

A number of other revolts against national conscription took place in the south. One of them was at Mudaynah, in the Basrah *liwa*, and another in Gharraf, in the Muntafiq *liwa*. While grievances arising from bad social and economic conditions were the real causes of dissatisfaction, the enforcement of national conscription brought matters to a head. The tribesmen who revolted, though poor and wretched, were ruthlessly crushed. The Mudaynah uprising was put down in September 1935, and the other in February 1936.

A more serious revolt that took place in the south was the second revolt of Rumaythah (April 1936). The Izrayj and Dhawalim tribes, it will be remembered, had already revolted in April a year before. Shaykh Khawwam, the tribal Chief of Izrayj, was removed and his cousin, Shaykh Shanshul al-Hasan, was installed as tribal chief in his place. Shanshul, who lacked the ability and popularity of Khawwam, had difficulty in keeping his tribesmen quiet. When the Government enforced national conscription, the situation at Rumaythah became exceedingly difficult to control. Matters came to a head when the Government prohibited (March 1936) the public ceremonial of Ashura' (the annual celebration of the assassination of Husayn), which prompted the tribes to adopt a manifestly hostile attitude. The Government again proclaimed martial law in that area and the rebellion was put down in May without much difficulty.

Finally, the Agra' tribes of Diwaniyah, led by Shaykh Sha'lan al-Atiyah, revolted in June 1936. Shaykh Sha'lan, it will be remembered, had raised a rebellion against both Ali Jawdat and Midfa'i (March 1935) in favour of an Ikha Government. The shaykh's services, it seems, were not fully recognized by the Government; he was, accordingly, easily won by the Government's opponents. The Government declared martial law in the area and despatched forces under the able command of General Bakr Sidqi, who ruthlessly crushed the rebellion. General Bakr arrested Shaykh Sha'lan and was in favour of executing him; but Hikmat Sulayman and Abu 't-Timman begged for mercy. The shaykh was at first sentenced to death by the court martial, but General Bakr's request to commute the sentence to exile was granted on the grounds that he had already given the shaykh a promise of pardon if he would surrender voluntarily.

THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE OPPOSITION

The Government's success in putting down the tribal uprisings, which were regarded as merely inspired by its opponents, prompted the leading ministers to tighten control over their opponents. The opposition papers were gradually put under more rigid censorship, and such papers as *as-Sarkha* and *al-Bayan*, which paid no attention to Government control, were immediately suppressed.¹ *Al-Islah*, whose criticism was rather mild, was at the outset temporarily suspended and later suppressed, never to appear again. *Al-Alam al-Arabi*, edited by Salim Hassun, whose cryptic criticism had often been resented by the Government, was also suppressed. Government officials whose loyalty to the Yasin-Rashid administration was suspected were either transferred or dismissed. Spies were stationed everywhere to report on the movements and activities of rival politicians and suspected Government officials. It was indeed an uncomfortable way of life (in which the present writer had his own share of discomfiture) for all suspected persons as well as for enlightened young men who had outspoken liberal ideas.

The most damaging opposition to the Government came from the Ahali group, led by Hikmat Sulayman and Ja'far Abu 't-Timman. The background and ideas of this group will be discussed in the following chapter, but its attack on the Government may be dealt with here. On 7 April 1936 the Ahali group issued *al-Bayan*, containing such damaging criticism that it was immediately suppressed. In a leading article Yasin and Rashid were attacked for having accomplished nothing useful to the nation since their coming into power. In another article the Government, which flattered itself on concluding a favourable agreement with England (by which the ownership of the railways was transferred to Iraq), was criticized for having virtually put 'the economy of Iraq under British control for another twenty years'.² When another issue of *al-Bayan* was still in the press, the Government, having been informed of a more damaging criticism, suppressed the paper and confiscated the press on 15 May 1936.

While the Government was suppressing the Middle Euphrates uprisings, Hikmat and Abu 't-Timman were able to hold a secret meeting to which a number of leading political opponents were

¹ These two papers were suppressed after the first issue. See *as-Sarkha*, 10 September 1935, and *al-Bayan*, 7 April 1936.

² *al-Bayan*, 7 April 1936, p. 1.

invited, such as Midfa'i and Naji as-Suwaydi. The Government's policy of ruthlessly suppressing the tribes was condemned, and the opposition leaders decided to submit a petition to the King criticizing the Government's action. The petition, signed by Abu 't-Timman on behalf of the leaders, was presented to the King on 10 May 1936. No Iraqi paper could dare to publish the petition, but a Syrian newspaper issued in Damascus, *al-Qabas*, published the text on 17 May 1936. Copies of the paper were later smuggled into and distributed in Baghdad. Another petition, signed by all leaders of opposing groups, was again presented to the King and published in *al-Qabas* on 24 May 1936.

Having been denied the right to issue any daily paper, the Ahali group petitioned the King on 12 August 1936, requesting him to put an end to the Government's rigid control of the press and to permit the reissue of suppressed papers. This petition, like its predecessors, became known to the public only through the foreign press, when it appeared in a Lebanese newspaper, *al-Masa'*, on 23 August 1936, signed by Hikmat Sulayman, Abu 't-Timman, and Kamil al-Chadirchi. A number of unlicensed papers were secretly edited and distributed, especially by radical and Communist groups, which attacked Yasin and Rashid personally and criticized their reactionary policy. Such papers were often seized by the police, and certain suspected Communists, such as Abd al-Qadir Isma'il, a member of the Ahali group, were arrested. But the Government's policy of increasingly restricting individual liberty inevitably led to dissatisfaction among the people and naturally caused them to sympathize with the opposition.

FALL OF THE YASIN-RASHID GOVERNMENT

Faced with such unrelenting opposition, Yasin and Rashid, instead of granting freedom of speech to their political opponents, began to talk of the dangers of frequent Cabinet changes and of Iraq's urgent need for a stable Government. There was, it is true, a genuine popular desire for stability; but Yasin, in ostensibly trying to gratify such a forlorn hope, was in fact aiming at strengthening his own position. He declared in Parliament on 4 January 1936 that Iraq's most urgent need was 'stability' and that this was necessary to 'enable the Government to carry out its programme in a peaceful atmosphere'.¹ By advocating stability Yasin shrewdly tried to fore-

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 6th Session, 1936, p. 189.

stall his opponents who wanted a Cabinet change; but the public had already begun to lose faith in his administration.

Yasin and Rashid, furthermore, embarked on a campaign of propaganda both abroad and at home. They had successfully won the confidence of the neighbouring Arab countries by advocating a pan-Arab policy and cultivating friendly relations. A number of prominent Egyptian and Syrian nationalists were invited to visit Iraq, and the exchange of visits between Iraqi Government students and Egyptian and Syrian students was encouraged. Certain Syrian daily press correspondents were so greatly impressed by the Iraqi Government's nationalistic tendencies and its support of pan-Arabism that Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi was often referred to in the Syrian press as the Arab Bismarck. The pan-Arab policy of the Yasin Cabinet, though overemphasized for propaganda purposes, was indeed based on genuine belief in pan-Arab ideas. It is significant to note that one of the critics of the Yasin-Rashid administration, Baqir ash-Shabibi, admitted in parliament on 28 April 1937, after the fall of that Administration, that its most striking feature was its genuine nationalist policy.¹

Inside the country Yasin and Rashid embarked on a number of tours in order to strengthen their position outside the capital. During 1935–6 Rashid Ali paid a number of visits to the northern and southern *liwas* and had conversations with their notables and tribal shaykhs. He gave them lavish promises which probably satisfied their own personal interests and thus procured their unqualified support of his Government. The most impressive visit, however, was that which Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi paid to the southern *liwas* in September 1936, where he was met by cheering crowds in almost every city through which he passed. At Basrah he was given a formal party by the Mayor on 5 September, attended by the dignitaries and senior government officials of the city. Yasin was so much impressed by the ovation given to him that he declared in an optimistic speech given at that party that it was 'his hope to continue in office during the next ten years' in order to carry out his Government's reform programme.² The people tacitly approved, but Yasin's opponents cynically remarked that the Prime Minister, by an avowed declaration to rule the country for the next ten years, was contemplating transforming the system of government into a dictatorship.

¹ *ibid.* 7th Session, 1937, p. 143.

² For text of the speech see *al-Bilad*, 6 September 1936.

Whether Yasin and Rashid had really agreed to transform the system of government into a dictatorship is difficult to determine; but it was noted that the Council of Ministers was actually dominated by them and that there was a tendency to exercise dictatorial power, in practice if not in name. Yasin's interference in the affairs of other departments had already resulted in a clash between him and his Minister of Education, Muhammad Rida ash-Shabibi, who was a long-standing member of the Ikha Party. Shabibi, in protest, resigned on 15 September 1935, and Yasin offered the position to his protégé, Sadiq al-Bassam. The Ikha Party itself, it will be remembered, was dissolved on the grounds that the party system was no longer compatible with a stable Government. Yasin's high-handed policy was also reflected in his attitude towards Parliament. Not only had Parliament become an obsequious assembly, but also, it seems, Yasin lost patience in long debates on legislation, and suggested, in a statement made in the Chamber of Deputies on 4 January 1936, that 'confidence in the Government' was sufficient to leave matters to it without going into unnecessary, prolonged discussion.¹ Yasin and Rashid were also attacked for furthering their own personal interests rather than the national interests.²

King Ghazi, who was then a young man of hardly twenty-four years old, felt uneasy about Yasin's conduct, which often conflicted with his own wishes. The King, it is true, had indulged in such hazardous activities as high-speed car-driving, which alarmed both his family and the Government, but Yasin's attempt to restrict Ghazi's activities created ill-feeling between them. Furthermore, one of the King's sisters had married a Greek subject without Royal consent in June 1936. This episode, which was regretted by all, aggravated matters, because the King made Yasin the scapegoat of an incident for which he was not directly responsible.³

Shortly before the overthrow of the Yasin-Rashid administration, King Ghazi had intimated to General Nuri, the Foreign Minister, his desire for a Cabinet change. In an interview with the writer,

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 6th Session, 1936, p. 190.

² See Abd-Allah al-Basir, *Fi Ahd al-Hashimi* (Baghdad, Rashid Press, [1936]). al-Basir was a pseudonym for Chadirchi.

³ Yasin tried to do everything possible to please the King, without much success. On 16 June 1936 the Cabinet issued a decree 'depriving any prince or princess who married without the consent of the King of all royal rights. If found guilty of conduct incompatible with the honour and dignity of the Royal house, he or she may be expelled from its membership and deprived of the title and rights of inheritance.'

General Nuri declared that he had communicated the King's desire to the Prime Minister; but the latter, counting on an ultimate understanding with Hikmat, was not of the opinion that he should resign. A rift had already developed between Sadiq al-Bassam, Minister of Education, and Muhammad Zaki, President of the Chamber of Deputies, which induced the latter to discuss with Hikmat the possibility of a Cabinet change. When General Nuri intimated the King's desire to Yasin, Yasin requested General Nuri first to see if there were any possibility of effecting a reconciliation between the Government and Hikmat's group. General Nuri tried to bring about an understanding, but succeeded only in reconciling Muhammad Zaki; Hikmat remained adamant in his opposition. Having won Muhammad Zaki to his side, Yasin, it seems, saw no reason for a Cabinet change.

Only a week passed after the failure of that attempt at reconciliation when suddenly and unexpectedly the Government was overthrown by the army. Yasin and Rashid were quite aware that intrigues might be planned secretly against their administration by Hikmat and his group; but it did not occur to them that Hikmat might turn to the army officers, whose loyalty to the Government was never suspected. The army indeed was regarded as the bulwark of the Government; its going over to the opposition sealed the fall of the Yasin-Rashid administration. The story of how Hikmat struck a bargain with the army to overthrow the Government will be dealt with in the following chapter.

RETROSPECT

In reviewing the events leading up to the fall of the Yasin-Rashid Government, it is possible to discern an increasing tendency towards the concentration of power in the hands of the central authority. Four years earlier, it will be recalled, Faysal deplored the weakness of the Government and advised his ministers to follow a moderate policy which would bring about co-operation between the Government and the people. The steady enlargement of the army, coinciding with successive victories attained over tribal uprisings, greatly enhanced the prestige and power of the Government. By the end of 1936, when the army proved capable of putting down any rebellion against authority, the Government's position became unchallenged.

The Government's firm control over the nation, which was then deemed necessary to maintain stability and order in the new State,

had been achieved at the expense of individual liberty and by subordinating all national institutions to the Executive. By frequent proclamation of martial law and resort to the army and police to enforce authority, rival politicians were silenced and the freedom of the press restricted. It was thus that for the ostensible object of enforcing law and order, but in reality seeking to concentrate all power in its hands, the Executive had become increasingly authoritarian, denying every legal channel of opposition to rival politicians or groups. This authoritarian tendency, which widened the gap between the people and the Government, rendered the latter's position helpless without the loyalty of the army. The army, accordingly, had become almost the sole guarantor for its staying in power.

Denied any legal means of opposition, rival groups were bound to resort to secret intrigues and clandestine activities. Since opposition through the press and tribal uprisings failed, Hikmat Sulayman had come to the conclusion that there remained for him only one possible means of overthrowing the Yasid-Rashin administration—the army. By secretly trying to alienate the loyalty of the leading army officers, Hikmat virtually disarmed the Government of its only effective power to crush the opposition; but his experiment of inviting the army to be the judge of who should be in authority had led to a complete shift in the incidence of political power from civilian to military hands.

V

THE FIRST MILITARY COUP D'ÉTAT
1936

Two widely different movements of opposition to the Cabinet were gathering momentum, but rebellion against the established Government was only possible when the two movements, divergent in ideals and aspirations as they were, joined hands in order to put an end to the alleged tyranny and corruption of the Yasin-Rashid regime. The two movements were the offshoot of entirely different ideologies and worked independently of each other. The first, best known as the Ahali group, advocated socialism and democracy while the other, mainly made up of army officers, professed nationalism and sought the eventual establishment of a military dictatorship. The Ahali group had a long way to go before it could claim support from the masses, though its leaders often spoke in the interests of the poor and the wretched. The army officers had won higher prestige and were supported by almost all national organizations.

At the outset the Yasin-Rashid administration was strongly supported by the army officers, and it was due only to military support, it will be recalled, that Yasin and Rashid were able to silence their political opponents by ruthlessly putting down the tribal-inspired uprisings of the Middle Euphrates. When, however, a few ringleaders among the army officers secretly went over to the opposition, the Cabinet's position became completely hopeless, yet it had no realization of the gravity of the situation. It was this Ahali-army honeymoon that set the opposition in motion and translated secret opposition into open rebellion. The work of the two groups was of far-reaching consequence and therefore deserves closer examination.

THE AHALI GROUP

The Ahali group was formed in 1931 by a few enthusiastic young men who were imbued with liberal ideas. They were of a circle which felt keenly that political power had for long been in the hands of a small set of elderly men who had deliberately prevented them from playing their part in the political life of their country. But these young men were greatly divided among themselves and therefore

were weak and politically impotent. They had no common background, social or cultural, and were thus divided into various groupings. There were, in the first place, those who had received their higher education abroad; and, in the second place, those who had received their higher education at home, mainly graduates of the Baghdad Law College. These young men of two camps, shrewd and ambitious though they were, failed to appreciate the benefit of co-operation, owing mainly to distrust and lack of intimate contact. But the need for a rapprochement among them was keenly felt and, therefore, a small group, composed of a handful of young men, was spontaneously organized, which came to be known as the Ahali group, after the name of its daily paper. At the outset the group advocated the principles of the French Revolution, with democracy as the ideal form of government. The *Ahali* newspaper, the group's organ, at once figured as the most prominent daily paper in the country, because the members of the group co-operated actively in the editing of the paper and contributed articles which had a wide influence in Baghdad.¹

In 1934 the Ahali group had undergone a change. Under the influence of Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim and Muhammad Hadid, the group adopted socialism as its first article of faith. Abd al-Fattah had become a socialist, it seems, in 1930 as a result of his reading on the Soviet Union while a graduate student at Columbia University. Hadid was a graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science and was much impressed by its outspoken socialist tendencies. Although he belonged to an old Mosul family, reputed for its wealth and conservatism, he brought back with him to Iraq a doctrine which shocked most of his fellow countrymen. And it was for this very reason that the group preferred to call their ideology Sha'biyah (Populism) rather than to have it labelled as socialism. Abd al-Fattah, with the aid of his Ahali friends edited two little volumes in which the ideas and ideals of the group were expounded. The first volume, though the larger, was introductory to the second, since it dealt with the history of political thought from the Greeks down to the Russian Revolution. The second volume, which was closely studied by the Ahali group, outlined the doctrine of the Sha'biyah, and became, to all intents and purposes, their programme.

The doctrine of Sha'biyah, seeking 'welfare for all the people' without distinction between individuals and classes on bases of wealth,

¹ The first issue of the paper was dated 2 January 1932.

birth, or religion, advocated sweeping social reforms in Iraq. It laid the main stress on the people as a whole rather than on the individual, but advocated in the meantime protection of the essential human rights, such as liberty, equality of opportunity, and freedom from tyranny. But the State, it was added, must pay proper attention to the health and education of the individual as well as recognizing his right to work. It follows accordingly that the Sha'biyah comprised the principles of both democracy and socialism, since it recognized the parliamentary system of government based on functional representation. Yet the Sha'biyah was to be differentiated from both since, in contrast to democracy, it advocated a kind of collectivism; and, in contrast to Marxist socialism, it did not admit the existence of a class struggle in society, or the revolutionary procedure in social change. It also recognized, in contrast to Marxist socialism, the institutions of the family and religion. Sha'biyah likewise recognized patriotism as an article of faith, but repudiated nationalism, since the latter had often led to imperialism and the domination in society of one class, while the former merely inspired the individual with loyalty to his country. 'The history of nationalism', read the Ahali manifesto, 'was full of blood, tyranny, and hypocrisy'; while the history of patriotism had shown that it advocated no aggression or social discrimination, and every citizen was fully recognized as equally important to his fatherland.¹

Active and more influential though it had become in 1934, the Ahali group did not feel that the time had come to organize a political party. Instead, it decided to organize a social circle for the propagation of Sha'biyah. Hence the Baghdad Club was opened early in 1934 for all educated young men who wanted to join in its social activities. In spite of the fact that the club was sabotaged by the nationalists, the ideas of Sha'biyah attracted more and more young men and stirred lively discussion. The club, however, was closed within a few months as a result of the indirect opposition of the Government. Indeed, the ideas of Sha'biyah did not make much headway, owing in the main to the opposition of the elder politicians and to the counter-propaganda of the nationalists. Sha'biyah, they violently declared, was none other than Communism called by a different name; it was therefore contrary to the national traditions of the Arabs and aimed at disestablishing the teachings of Islam.

¹ See *Mutal'at fi ash-Sha'biyah* (Reflections on Populism), Ahali Series no. 3 (Baghdad, Ahali Press, 1935).

In the circumstances the group decided to use more practical means of widening its appeal to Iraqi society. The term Sha'biyah was dropped and the more radical ideas were abandoned for the time being. It was possible accordingly to increase the membership of the group by recruiting a few of the more liberal of the older politicians. Kamil al-Chadirchi, a former member of the Ikha Party, joined the group in 1934. Chadirchi, who left the Ikha Party when Rashid Ali al-Gaylani came into power in 1933, had found that party uncongenial to his rather more liberal ideas. In one of his early articles written when he was an Ikha member, he had published a stimulating discussion on sovereignty and democracy in which he advocated the necessary participation of the general public in the Government.¹ His ideas were rather too progressive for the Ikha Party and it was therefore natural for Chadirchi to revolt against it and join the Ahali group. Under the influence of Chadirchi, Ja'far Abu 't-Timman and Hikmat Sulayman were also won over and enhanced the prestige and power of the Ahali group. Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, it will be recalled, was a former leader of the Watani (National) Party. He was known for his sincerity and straightforwardness; he was a respected national figure; and a professed believer in democratic institutions. But Abu 't-Timman had been disillusioned through his past association with various nationalist politicians, and therefore tended towards the left. His accession to the Ahali group was accordingly greatly appreciated, and he became its leader. Hikmat Sulayman, of whom more will be said in a later section, was also a former member of the Ikha Party. He was the initiator, it will be recalled, of the Sulaykh meetings, but his quarrel with the Yasin-Rashid group brought him also to the Ahali group.

During 1934-5 the Ahali group, enlarged though it had become, was still in a state of flux. But the coming of the Ikha Party into power in March 1935 definitely inspired the group to reorganize itself and to work more actively towards achieving power. An executive committee was set up composed of Abu 't-Timman, Hikmat Sulayman, Chadirchi, Hadid, and Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim. The committee established personal contacts with other elder politicians and especially with members of other non-political societies such as the Society to Combat Illiteracy. The meetings of the Ahali group were kept secret, and those who joined were closely cross-examined and sworn to be faithful to the principles of the group before they were

¹ See *al-Bilad*, 28 August 1931.

admitted. But Sha'biyah was no longer preached, as if it had been entirely abandoned, and only the demand for 'reforms', in a general way, had become the chief slogan. There was, however, always an important left wing within the group which cherished more radical ideas. Chief among its members were Abd al-Qadir, Isma'il, Hadid, and Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim. The first was an outspoken Marxist who advocated Communism pure and simple, while the other two asserted the principles of Sha'biyah.

At this juncture some of the members suggested the transformation of the Ahali group into a political party, recognized by the Government, and called for a straightforward opposition to the existing regime through legal channels. Hikmat Sulayman and Abu 't-Timman were opposed to the idea, preferring to gather strength through personal contacts with Government officials and army officers. Abd al-Fattah, who advocated the formation of a political party, expressed his disapproval and thus, side-stepping power in the approaching hour of victory, withdrew from the group for which he had worked so assiduously.

The Ahali group continued to arouse opposition to the Government by means of violent attacks in its paper, but such attacks were easily met by the Government's rigid control of the press. The Government, moreover, suppressed all elements of opposition by force; the Communists were arrested, and government officials who were suspected were dismissed. Some of the liberal elder politicians presented petitions to the King protesting against the tyranny of the Yasin-Rashid Cabinet, but all were in vain.

It was soon realized that the Cabinet could not be overthrown save by a military rebellion, and that such a plot could not be arranged before the army's loyalty to the Government was alienated. The Ahali group, indeed, had already begun to establish secret contacts with a few army officers. Hikmat Sulayman emerged as the hero of the plot and it was entirely due to his efforts that General Bakr Sidqi, officer commanding the Second Division, was won for the group. Hikmat Sulayman, younger brother of the famous Mahmud Shevket Pasha, must have remembered his brother's great adventurous feat when he marched on Constantinople at the head of the rebellious Turkish army in July 1909, demanding the abdication of the Sultan Abd al-Hamid II. With that memory in mind, Hikmat persuaded Bakr to lead a rebellion in the Iraq army in order to force the Yasin-Rashid Cabinet to resign. It is reported to the writer that Bakr Sidqi

was brought to a secret gathering of the Ahali group only once, because Hikmat Sulayman was afraid that frequent contact with Bakr would arouse the suspicion of the Government; he therefore volunteered to act as a liaison between Bakr and the Ahali group. Bakr Sidqi in turn brought another supporter, namely, General Abd al-Latif Nuri, officer commanding the First Division; and it was mainly due to these two army officers that the revolt was carried out in so masterly a fashion.

Apart from the disloyalty of Bakr and his colleague Abd al-Latif, it should be noted that the warmth of the army officers' loyalty to the Cabinet had long since begun to cool. The army, indeed, was too often used by the Cabinet to silence its political opponents, and a feeling gradually developed among the army officers that they were being used as a tool against the political opponents of the Cabinet rather than against the external enemies of their country. The political system of Iraq had accordingly been weakened and the need for a 'strong' government was keenly felt by the army officers. It was reported that the army officers often argued that the army itself should rule the country in order to provide the strength necessary for reform, as was the case in Turkey and Persia. This growing spirit will be dealt with more adequately in another section; but it should be noted in passing that the disloyalty of Bakr Sidqi and his colleagues had ample justification in the changed attitude of the army officers.

HIKMAT SULAYMAN'S ROLE

Contact between the Ahali group and the army was initiated by Hikmat who, having persuaded Bakr Sidqi to espouse the Ahali cause, served as the liaison between the two. The ideologies of the army and the Ahali group were far from being identical, but the protagonists of the two movements, Hikmat and Bakr, had almost the same outlook and therefore opposing ideologies were subordinated to the wishes of the leaders. The Hikmat-Bakr liaison was of prime importance in bringing the co-operation of the army with the Ahali group to a successful conclusion; but it also shows to what extent political movements in Iraq were dominated by personalities rather than by ideologies. A study of Hikmat, therefore, throws much light on the subject; for the same reason another section will be devoted to Bakr.

Hikmat Sulayman, it will be recalled, was a former member of the Ikha Party. Of all the Iraqi politicians, he was best known for his

courageous and adventurous spirit, for his frankness and straightforwardness. He became popular among the young men because he appeared to them as a progressive elder politician. Apart from that, his importance lay in his great influence with the Diyala and certain Middle Euphrates tribes.

After his disagreement with the Ikha Party in 1935, Hikmat joined the Ahali group and worked to promote its activities. He was already on close personal terms with Ja'far Abu 't-Timman and Kamil Chadirchi, also former members of opposition parties, and therefore found the new group quite congenial. Being an elder politician and far more experienced in party politics, he became the most powerful member of the group. But Hikmat never declared himself a socialist; he deemed it sufficient to call himself a 'reformist' on the lines of the Kemalist movement in Turkey. He shared the views of his colleagues about the necessity of improving the lot of the peasants, whom he thought were in a deplorable condition. He also supported their principle of Government control of the new and infant industries of Iraq, and the necessity of starting new ones. His whole social and economic background was based, however, not on reading Marx and Engels, as was the case with his colleagues, but on his own understanding of the Kemalist regime.

In 1935 Hikmat spent a few months in Turkey. He visited some of its industries and acquainted himself with the country's social and economic development. Hikmat had been educated in Constantinople and had always admired the Turks, but on this visit he was the more impressed since he was able to compare the development under the Kemalist movement with the Ottoman regime under the Sultans.¹ In December 1935 Hikmat returned to Iraq and was seen walking down the streets of Baghdad with a hat on his head—one noticeable sign of the effect of his visit to Turkey. He gave several interviews to newspaper men about the recent developments in Turkey, but the most important one was published in *al-Bilad*, one of the leading papers in Iraq. Rafael Butti, editor of *Bilad* and former member of the Ikha Party, interviewed Hikmat in person and wrote three leading articles in his paper in which he expounded Hikmat's ideas.

¹ There was, perhaps, a sentimental reason which made Hikmat admire the Kemalist movement. Mustafa Kemal was a former member of the Committee of Union and Progress and served, during the coup d'état of 1909, as Chief of Staff under Mahmud Shevket Pasha, Hikmat's elder brother, who led the Turkish army in revolt from Salonika to Constantinople and forced Sultan Abd al-Hamid II to abdicate.

Hikmat began his interview by pointing out that Iraq's greatest needs were real reforms. But how could such reforms be carried out? 'Reforms', said Hikmat, 'could only be carried out by an enlightened Government, with personnel who are known for their progressive opinions, efficiency, and strength.' The existing conditions in Iraq, Hikmat added, were very primitive, and the people knew little about how to exploit the economic possibilities of their country. If there were an enlightened Government in Iraq, it would pay attention to the exploitation of such possibilities. He gave ample examples from contemporary development in modern Turkey.

But such an enlightened Government, said Hikmat, needed also stability. In Iraq there had often been changes in the Government, based in the main on personal issues. The cycle of the frequent rise and fall of Cabinets had undermined the political system. In Iraq, said Hikmat, the cycle of the rise and fall of the Cabinets might be compared to a 'joywheel', with eight seats filled by eight ministers. Under the joywheel were always some fifteen or twenty ex-ministers waiting impatiently for it to stop; and if it happened that the wheel did stop and the eight ministers left their seats, then another eight of the waiting ex-ministers would at once hasten to jump on to the wheel and occupy the vacant seats. The wheel would then resume its cyclic movement, and the remaining ex-ministers, including the eight ministers who had just left their seats, would all co-operate for their mutual end, namely, to stop the joywheel again in order that each might have another chance. As this cycle continued it was obvious that the ministers in power would have no time left for work, but only time to defend themselves from the unrelenting assault of the ex-ministers. In the circumstances no constructive work could be done and this well explained why very little progress, if any, had been effected in Iraq.¹

THE ARMY OFFICERS

From the inception of the Iraqi Government there had been keen interest in organizing a well-disciplined national army along European lines, in order to maintain internal order and stability.² During the

¹ See *al-Bilad*, 15, 16, and 17 December 1935.

² In 1921 the nucleus of the army was organized: 'on the recommendation of the Minister of Defence (Ja'far al-Askari) the Council of Ministers decreed that the Iraq army should be organized, trained, dressed, and equipped on British lines.' See Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Report . . . to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq*, October 1920–March 1922 (London, H.M.S.O., 1923) p. 53.

mandatory period a small force was trained and gradually gained practical experience in putting down a number of Kurdish uprisings. The Iraqi army proved, despite a certain sceptical attitude of the League of Nations to British assurances, capable of maintaining order within the new State which was to be granted full independence.

After the winning of independence the army, as it was then constituted, was no longer sufficient for Iraq's national needs, because it was deemed necessary that the army should be the guardian of the country's independence as well as the instrument for maintaining internal order. Long before the termination of the mandate the Iraqi Government sought to introduce compulsory military service, but it was opposed both by the League, as a matter of principle, and by Great Britain on the grounds that the measure might involve Iraq in military operations against the tribes, who were opposed to conscription. When, however, the hour of emancipation from the mandate was approaching in 1931, the Iraqi Government began to prepare a draft bill of conscription which was eventually passed, after certain initial difficulties were overcome, in 1934.

The Iraqi army stood up to the expectations of the country when in August 1933, only a year after the attainment of independence, it dealt with the Assyrian affair so promptly and effectively that, it was then contended, it had saved the integrity of Iraq. Bakr Sidqi, commander of the forces which put down that uprising, suddenly emerged as an unrivalled national hero. Subsequent tribal uprisings in the Middle Euphrates, it will be recalled, were also successfully suppressed under the able command of General Bakr Sidqi. These successes taught the army officers to perceive their own strength, and the Iraqi nation to eye them with reverential awe.

It was thus natural that the army's prestige, and the high position it occupied in the national life of Iraq, caused various ideological groups to approach the army officers in order to win them to their side. But it is safe to say that the nationalists, especially the ultra-nationalists, were the most influential group in the army since they had long ago been able to inspire the army with pan-Arab ideas.

The ideals and aspirations of the army officers and their contempt for the political regime in Iraq found ample justification in the actual working of the Iraqi Government. The army officers felt that while they had faithfully fulfilled their duty in suppressing the tribal uprisings, the politicians in Baghdad were quarrelling and intriguing against one another by inspiring those tribes to rise in revolt. The

Iraqi system of government had certainly failed to impress the army, and the politicians had lost their prestige through their intrigues. The disillusionment of the army officers was reflected in voicing certain grievances such as that the army was excessively used to put down inspired tribal uprisings, while the politicians were to gain the fruits of victory. Why should not the army itself, it was whispered among the army officers, put an end to the quarrel and vices of the politicians and rule the country through a military dictatorship?

In the circumstances the army officers often discussed the existing political situation in Iraq and compared it unfavourably with the neighbouring regimes in Turkey and Persia. It was contended, accordingly, that unless the army were strengthened, Iraq would remain weak and incapable of realizing the national ideal. They therefore came to the conclusion that the army should rule the country and help to create a strong and stable Government. Just as the military regimes in Turkey and Persia were eliminating foreign control and carrying out reforms, so should the army officers in Iraq rule their country in order to eliminate the last vestiges of foreign control, to create a stable political machine, and, finally, to liberate the sister Arab countries which were still struggling towards freedom and unity.

The most intensely nationalistic elements in the army were the younger rather than the older army officers. Owing to the passive attitude of the latter, these young men often organized themselves into small groups and discussed the ways and means of realizing their aspirations. Of the older army officers, only Bakr Sidqi was able to impress his younger subordinates with his energy and commanding personality. There were, it is true, a few officers who suspected Bakr's intentions and his personal opportunism; but Bakr, with the support of both the older and younger army officers, posed as the only soldier who could command the respect of the entire army. His role in the Iraq army can hardly be overestimated. A study of Bakr, therefore, as the most powerful army officer, may add to a real understanding of the role of the army in the internal politics of Iraq.

GENERAL BAKR SIDQI

Bakr Sidqi, though he had only recently emerged as a national hero, had long been watching the internal politics of Iraq with a keen eye. He won his reputation as an able and courageous soldier during the Assyrian affair in 1933; it was indeed owing to his daring handling

of the uprising that it was so ruthlessly crushed. Thus he suddenly emerged as the saviour of his country in the time of her trouble. On his return to Baghdad he was applauded enthusiastically while he motored through the main street, seated on the right side of Prime Minister Rashid Ali al-Gaylani.

It will be recalled that it was Hikmat who had encouraged Bakr to take the line of action that he did in regard to the Assyrian rising. In an interview with the writer, Hikmat pointed out that Bakr had deeply impressed him with his ability and they had become intimate friends. Hikmat said that the friendship began when Bakr, shortly before the operations against the Assyrians, had visited him in Baghdad and had a long conversation with him regarding the situation in the north. Hikmat could not recall the details of the intimate conversation, but declared that from that time he and Bakr took each other into their confidence.

It has been contended that after the Assyrian affair Bakr began to entertain the possibility of the army's intervention in politics in order to help to fulfil Iraq's national aspirations. Such a move had been hinted by Bakr in a public speech which he gave to the people of Mosul at a reception for the returning army after the crushing of the Assyrian uprising, in which he said:¹ 'Thanks to you . . . thanks which I offer as a pledge of what the army is about to perform in the future, in accomplishment of the great duty, which the army has felt and is still feeling that it must be prepared to perform. Therefore let us, with army and nation, await that day.'

Subsequent relations between Hikmat and Bakr became more intimate, but Hikmat was then still an active member of the Ikha Party and there was no question of alienating Bakr's loyalty from Yasin and Rashid. Conversations between Bakr and Hikmat regarding the army merely explored the ways and means of strengthening it as the only guarantee of Iraq's independence. Their model, as well as their inspiration, was indeed Kemalist Turkey, because that country, they argued, had been able to maintain her independence only through the reorganization of her army. Taha al-Hashimi, then Chief of the General Staff and brother of Yasin, approved Hikmat's ideas and sought his co-operation for strengthening the army.

When the rift occurred between Hikmat and Yasin after the latter had formed his Cabinet in 1935, Taha naturally took his brother's

¹ For the complete text of the speech see Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, p. 204.

side. Bakr's admiration of Hikmat continued, but his loyalty to the Government was never questioned and he actually took an active part in crushing the tribal uprisings of the Middle Euphrates. But Bakr soon came to realize that his Chief of the General Staff, Taha al-Hashimi, though able and keen, was in reality not strongly in favour of strengthening and reorganizing the army. After his remarkable successes in the Middle Euphrates, Bakr, perhaps, wanted to be the Chief of the General Staff himself. But Taha was the brother of the Prime Minister and there was no question of removing him. Bakr accordingly gradually came to believe that the army's future would depend on Hikmat's becoming a Prime Minister. Hikmat intimated to the writer that Bakr had come to this conclusion independently, but no doubt Hikmat had added conviction to such a view.

Bakr has been reproached for betraying Yasin and Rashid and for seeking co-operation with Hikmat only as a means to his own personal glory. His critics cynically remarked that he had looked at the rulers of his neighbours, Turkey and Persia, and found it significant that both of them had arisen from humble army ranks to rule their country and carry out reforms under military regimes. Personal emulation may certainly have buttressed Bakr's change of attitude toward the Yasin-Rashid Cabinet. Indeed, it was reported that after putting down the Assyrian risings, Bakr had expected more recognition from the Yasin-Rashid administration. Moreover, it was keenly felt by Bakr's entourage in the army that he was worthy to be the Chief of the General Staff, and that his promotion would be advantageous both to him and his friends. Bakr and his followers must have expected compensation if Hikmat were helped to come into power. Subsequent events proved that these expectations were justified.

THE MUTINY IN THE ARMY AND THE MARCH ON BAGHDAD

Hikmat, it will be recalled, was the link between Bakr and the Ahali group; but in reality there was no common background between Bakr and that group, nor sufficient contact between them to create a common outlook. Hikmat's intimate conversations with Bakr, it seems, were solely for the purpose of using the army against the Yasin Cabinet which Hikmat probably did not disclose to his group until the army manœuvres were about to take place in the autumn of 1936.

In October 1936 Taha al-Hashimi, Chief of the General Staff, was on leave in Turkey and Bakr was appointed Acting Chief of the

General Staff in his place. Taha had already planned to organize army manœuvres on a large scale in the area between Khaniqin and Baghdad early in November, but Bakr, as Acting Chief of the General Staff, decided to take the opportunity to lead a revolt in order to force the Cabinet to resign. His plan was to march on Baghdad before the manœuvres should take place.

In the course of an interview with the writer, Abd al-Latif Nuri said that Bakr had disclosed the secret plan of the coup d'état to him only a week before it actually took place, that is, on 23 October 1936, when preparations were begun for the proposed army manœuvres. On 25 October Bakr paid a visit to Abd al-Latif at the Ministry of Defence, and there the two commanders held confidential conversations about the details of the plot.

Bakr left Baghdad on the next day for his headquarters at Qara-Tappa, half-way up the Baghdad-Kirkuk railway line. He disclosed his plan to several army officers who were taken into his confidence. It was decided that the Second Division of the army, stationed at Qara-Ghan, was to assume the offensive in the march on Baghdad; while the First Division, stationed at the head of Qanat ar-Ruz, situated on one of Diyala's streams on the north-east of Baghdad, would remain behind the Second Division for defence measures. All the necessary preparations were made with complete secrecy between 26 and 28 October. On 27 October Bakr paid another visit to Abd al-Latif Nuri, who had been at his headquarters at Ruz, reviewed the whole situation, and approved the preparations. It was at this meeting that the two Commanders signed a letter (in the form of a petition) to the King demanding the resignation of the Yasin Cabinet. The letter was sent secretly to Hikmat to carry in person to the King. The two Commanders also ordered the 'proclamation' to the people of Baghdad to be typed in their presence, and signed by Bakr Sidqi himself. It was decided, likewise, to call the forces marching on Baghdad 'The National Reform Force', and place it under Bakr's own leadership.

Before Bakr had finally decided to carry out his secret plot, Hikmat broke the news to the Ahali group, declaring that the army officers had come to the conclusion that the Yasin-Rashid administration was intolerable, and that they had decided to raise a revolt.¹ Hikmat had

¹ The writer has not been able to ascertain the date of Hikmat's disclosure of the news to his group. But, it seems, this could not have taken place before 23 October, because it was neither possible for Hikmat to disclose it before the

undoubtedly brought important but grave news to his fellow members. He intimated that Bakr and Abd al-Latif had approached him with the plan of the coup d'état; he pointed out that the army's decision gave the opportune moment for the group to carry out its reforms, and that failure to accept its offer would not stop it from action. The group discussed the matter very thoroughly and, it seems, there were fears that the movement would be entirely run by the army officers. Abu 't-Timman, Chadirchi, and Hadid raised inquiries as to the danger of an eventual establishment of military dictatorship. Hikmat tried to persuade his fellow members that the army had no such designs, and that he was assured by Bakr that once the Cabinet had been overthrown the army would withdraw leaving the administration to the new Cabinet. As evidence of good faith, Hikmat pointed out, Bakr had asked to have the text of the proclamation and the letter to the King drawn up by the Ahali group. Confronted with such a *fait accompli* and with the persuasive arguments of Hikmat, the group finally decided to associate itself with the army's mutiny. Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, Chadirchi, and Hadid at once began to prepare the texts of the proclamation and the letter to the King. The proclamation was signed by Bakr as the Chief of the National Reform Force, and the letter was signed by both Bakr and Abd al-Latif as Commanders of the First and Second Divisions of the Iraq army.

On 28 October Abd al-Latif left his headquarters for Baghdad to see if the news of the plot had leaked out. He saw Hikmat, and handed the letter to the King signed by the two Commanders. Copies of the proclamation were given to certain reliable army officers to be distributed the next day to the people of Baghdad. Muhammad Ali Jawad, Commander of the Iraqi Air Force and one of Bakr's most intimate friends, was asked to send a few aeroplanes to Bakr's headquarters at Qara-Ghan, equipped with bombs and gasoline.

On Wednesday night, 28 October 1936, Bakr and his National Reform Force moved secretly towards Ba'qubah, a town on the northern outskirts of Baghdad, and stationed themselves there in preparation for the move on the capital on the next morning. The town was declared the next morning to be under the military occupation of the National Reform Force and from here, at 7.30 a.m. on

plot had been finally agreed upon between Bakr and Abd al-Latif Nuri on 23 October; nor was it possible after 26 October, since it was at that very meeting of the group that the proclamation was written and forwarded by Hikmat to Bakr, when it was typed and signed the next day by Bakr at Ruz.

Thursday (29 October 1936), Bakr ordered his forces to start their celebrated 'march on Baghdad'.

The leaders of the Ahali group must have passed the night in anxiety and fear lest the Government should discover the plot, but on the morning of Thursday they found that the life of Baghdad was normal. The leaders had held a meeting on the eve of the coup d'état at Hikmat's house, to which Jamil al-Midfa'i was invited; but when the latter failed to attend, Abu 't-Timman was asked to intimate the secret plan to Jamil. When Abu 't-Timman paid a visit to Jamil in the evening of the same day, he only hinted at the plot and Jamil did not understand the implication of his remarks. On Thursday morning the leaders again met at Abu 't-Timman's house where they waited for their ingenious plot to be carried out. Hikmat naturally was not present, since he was then on his way carrying the army's letter to the King. It happened by coincidence that one of the Ahali members, Abd al-Qadir Isma'il, who for long had been under police surveillance for his alleged Communist propaganda, was due for investigation by the police early in the morning. Isma'il saw the futility of the Government's repressive measures and knew that within a few hours he was to set himself free.

At 8 a.m. on the same day (29 October 1936) Hikmat paid a visit to Ra'uf al-Chadirchi, one of his old and intimate friends, who was also a friend of Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi, before he made his way to the King's palace to deliver the army's message. Ra'uf, who was trying to effect an understanding between Hikmat and Yasin, was pleased with Hikmat's visit and told him that the Prime Minister had just been discussing with him the possibility of a reconciliation. But Hikmat replied cynically, 'Since Yasin wanted to rule the country for ten years, why should he want to reconcile the opposition?' At 8.30, Hikmat became excited and walked out to see if there were any signs of the coming aeroplanes. He suddenly heard the roar of the planes over Baghdad, and hurriedly came back to say goodbye to Ra'uf, adding: 'Yasin wanted to rule the country for ten years; but by Allah, he will not be able to rule either for ten days or ten hours; not even for ten minutes!' He left his friend's house immediately in order to play his part in the drama which had just begun. Five aeroplanes of the Iraqi Royal Air Force were seen flying over Baghdad and dropping leaflets containing the proclamation, signed by Bakr Sidqi as Chief of the National Reform Force, telling the people of Baghdad that the Iraqi army had requested the King to dismiss

Yasin and ask Hikmat to form a new Cabinet. The text of the proclamation follows:

To the noble People of Iraq,

The patience of the Iraqi army, comprising your sons, has been exhausted as a result of the situation from which you have been suffering owing to the conduct of the Government, whose sole object has been to promote its own personal interests without paying any attention to the welfare of the public. The army, accordingly, has requested His Majesty the King to dismiss the Cabinet and form a new one composed of sincere men under the leadership of Hikmat Sulayman, who holds a high position in the eyes of the nation and is esteemed for his noble career. Since we have no other objective save your welfare and the strengthening of the country's position, you will undoubtedly support your brethren in the army and its leaders with all your powers, as the power of the people is the most reliable in times of the country's greatest need.

And you, public officials, with whom we all are brothers and colleagues in the service of the country—for which we all work to make her able to serve the interest of the people—we expect you to follow that same [national] duty which has impelled us to request the King to act in the interest of the country, namely, to boycott the unjust Government by leaving your offices and remaining in attendance until a [new] government is formed in the service of which you will take pride. The army may be compelled to take unavoidable measures which may cause some harm to those who do not answer our sincere appeal, materially and morally.

Bakr Sidqi al-Askari, Commander,
Chief of the National Reform force.

At the same time copies of the proclamation were distributed by certain army officers, while a few policemen began to give away copies in the cafés and to people in the streets. The King had already seen one which Rustum Haydar, Chief of the Royal Household, had given him. He read it with mixed feelings. But his apprehensions must have been allayed when early in the morning, as the National Reform Force began marching from Ba'qubah towards Baghdad, he received a telegram from Bakr and Abd al-Latif assuring him of the army's loyalty to the throne.

Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi, who had left Ra'uf's house only a few minutes before Hikmat's arrival, was at the house of Jamil Midfa'i when he first heard the news of the mutiny. Unaware of his approaching fall, he nevertheless felt uneasy about his political opponents and was trying unsuccessfully to persuade Jamil to join the Cabinet. During their conversation the aeroplanes had dropped the proclamation which took the capital by surprise; when the news

reached Yasin he at once broke off the conversation and hurried to his office at the *Serai*. He spoke to Bakr by long-distance telephone, and tried to persuade him to stop his movement; but Bakr intimated to Yasin that 'the movement was with the knowledge and approval of the King'. Yasin, accordingly, at once called a meeting of the Council of Ministers. No decision, it seems, had been taken when the Prime Minister was called by the King to attend a meeting at the palace.

THE KING'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE COUP D'ÉTAT

As soon as King Ghazi had been informed of the mutiny in the army, he called the British Ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr (now Lord Inverchapel), for consultation. Sir Archibald arrived at the Zuhur Palace at 9.45 a.m., and found the King in a nervous state. He asked him whether he wanted to resist the movement. The King replied that he had neither approved of the movement nor asked his ministers to check it. His Majesty's Ambassador thereupon advised King Ghazi to call his ministers for consultation. He also advised him that the army should not interfere in politics.

The King thus called his ministers to a meeting at the palace, over which he presided. Prime Minister Yasin al-Hashimi and Foreign Minister General Nuri as-Sa'id came immediately. Nuri was nervous, but Yasin was calm. General Ja'far al-Askari, Minister of Defence, arrived somewhat later. Rashid Ali, Minister of Interior, preferred to remain at his office to maintain order and to issue instructions to the Mutassarifs (provincial governors) on how to deal with the situation.

The discussion at the Zuhur Palace meeting was very heated. Verbatim minutes were never taken and thus the actual statements of those who attended could not be reported in full. But the writer has been able to interview both General Nuri and Lord Inverchapel, the only two surviving members who took part in the deliberations, and consequently he is able to trace the general trends of discussion. Yasin, having reviewed the political situation, admitted that there was opposition to his Cabinet; but a revolt of the army was the last thing that he had thought of, least of all on the part of Bakr Sidqi. He reported that shortly before he came to the palace he had been in touch with Bakr who assured him that 'the movement had the knowledge and approval of the King'. The King at once denied the allegation. Yasin, who was half-minded to resign, suggested that

the movement be resisted and thought that with the forces in the provinces he would be able to check it. King Ghazi, however, kept silent and did not comment on Yasin's suggestion. Yasin accordingly inferred that the King did not approve of resistance; he therefore had no other choice but to resign. At this juncture Sir Archibald Clark Kerr suggested that Hikmat be invited to the meeting to discuss the situation with him. Believing that the matter was now entirely in the hands of the two parties, Sir Archibald withdrew but asked both Yasin and Nuri to see him at the British Embassy when the meeting was over.

While the meeting at the Zuhur Palace was taking place, Hikmat, who left Ra'uf's house on hearing the roar of the aeroplanes, was on his way thither with the letter of the two Commanders, which he had been commissioned to hand over in person to the King. Hikmat thus appeared at the palace while the discussion was going on. When he was invited to attend the meeting, he refused, and merely handed over the letter to Rustum Haydar, Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, in the presence of several army officers, to whom Hikmat referred as witnesses. He left the palace immediately afterwards. The text of the letter follows:

Your Majesty is undoubtedly aware of the policy followed by the present Government, which is imbued with nepotism and personal aggrandizement, and which has led to the ruin and destruction of the public welfare and the public interest. It has also led, by its vanity, to an encroachment on the [powers of the] Crown and has probably been looking farther than that.

Your Majesty is also aware that the army, with its leaders and soldiers, has been faithfully obeying [the Government's] orders because they were issued in your name. Inasmuch as the situation has become intolerable and is ever deteriorating owing to continual disturbances; and since the Government's policy is not likely to change; and since justice is no longer maintained and poverty and bigotry are prevalent in the country for the sole purpose of enriching a special class whose leaders are in the present Government—the army, which is conscious of the country's interests and desires to strengthen her, may not keep silent in the face of this serious situation which would undoubtedly lead to destruction.

For this reason the army approaches Your Majesty with a request to save the country from this degrading position by issuing an order to dismiss the present Cabinet and by appointing a Cabinet composed of sincere sons of the nation under the leadership of Hikmat Sulayman within three hours [of this notice]; and in case the Cabinet does not obey Your Majesty's orders during the specified time limit, the army—which is

still loyal to Your Majesty and the country—will fulfil its duty in the public interest, [an action] you would certainly support.

Commander Abd al-Latif Nuri,
Commander Bakr Sidqi.

Failing to come to terms with the leaders of the revolt, Yasin had either to resist the movement by force or to resign. The King remained opposed to resistance: he could not forget his previous bitter experience with the Prime Minister. Now that the army had revolted, he seized the opportunity to get rid of Yasin and Rashid Ali. Yasin had no choice and he immediately afterwards tendered his letter of resignation.¹ The text of the letter follows:

Sir,

Your Majesty is well aware that the present Cabinet has tried with all its might to maintain order throughout the country and has endeavoured with every possible means to raise the level of the country and realize her aspirations as far as circumstances outside Iraq allowed. But it seems that lack of experience and greed have led certain men astray from [the duty of] the country's defence to attempt an action which, I believe, will lead to evil results. I have discussed the situation with my colleagues and decided to avoid leading the country into internal trouble; I therefore hasten to present to Your Majesty my resignation and I hope that by your acceptance you will relieve me of the burden of the ministry. I pray the Almighty to protect you against trouble and to defend the interests of the country.

In his letter, it is to be noted, Yasin appeared as obedient and loyal to King and country, but he had tendered his resignation only reluctantly under the threat of arms and not because the King desired his resignation. The King immediately accepted Yasin's resignation and invited Hikmat to form the new Cabinet.

The King's attitude has led to the theory, held by friends of Yasin and Rashid, that since he was so anxious to get rid of the Yasin-Rashid regime he was in league with the leaders of the rebellion. So far as the writer has been able to ascertain, King Ghazi had no prior intimation of the plot. It is true that the King had many friends among the army officers, and they often hinted to him that they were ready when he needed them. Since the King resented both Yasin and Rashid, it was therefore taken for granted by Bakr and his colleagues

¹ The three hour time-limit set forth in the proclamation expired at 11.30 a.m. At that moment five aeroplanes of the Iraqi Royal Air Force, led by Muhammad Ali Jawad, reappeared over Baghdad and dropped four bombs: one in front of the Council of Ministers, the second in front of Parliament House, the third in front of the post office and near Yasin's house, the fourth went astray into the Tigris. Only seven casualties were reported.

that his attitude would at any rate be sympathetic to them. It is reported, however, that Bakr had intimated the army's move to the King on the morning of 29 October and assured him of the army's loyalty to the throne. This contact with the King was perhaps what induced Bakr to report to Yasin that the movement had 'the knowledge and approval of the King'. As to a prior knowledge of the movement by the King, the writer is inclined to believe that the leaders of the rebellion deemed it quite unnecessary to reveal the secret to young King Ghazi before it had actually started.

ASSASSINATION OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

With Yasin's resignation the crisis would seem to have passed. An unhappy incident occurred, however, which had unfortunate effects on subsequent events. This was no less than Bakr Sidqi's sudden and unexpected decision to assassinate the Minister of Defence, Ja'far al-Askari.

Before he had gone to attend the conference at Zuhur Palace, Ja'far, on his own initiative as Minister of Defence, had issued rather contradictory and confusing orders presumably designed to stop the march on Baghdad and overthrow the plot. One order was to the Commander of Armoured Forces to wait for him at Shahraban; another was to the Commander of Artillery to move to Baghdad, but not to do anything until he saw him; another was to the Commander of Infantry, also to move to Baghdad; and another to Abd al-Latif Nuri to stop any action until he came to see him. These were construed by Bakr as definitely intended to create confusion in the army and prevent the coup d'état. Ja'far's orders were given to an officer who was asked to hand them in person to the Commanders concerned. When that officer went to the rebels to hand over the orders, Bakr's attention was called to them and he at once discovered in Ja'far an enemy to his movement. It is contended that had these orders been given to the Commanders concerned, they might have created trouble for Bakr owing to Ja'far's popularity among the army officers.

Nor was that all. Ja'far's next move cost him his life. After he had issued his orders to the officers, Ja'far went to the Zuhur Palace to take part in the Cabinet deliberations. It is reported that he was in favour of the resignation of the Cabinet, and that he was, indeed, neither a staunch supporter of Yasin nor of his policy. But he saw no reason why the army should march on Baghdad once the Cabinet had decided to resign. He accordingly asked the King to give him a

personal letter to Bakr in order to stop the army's advance. It was a daring move and young King Ghazi did not foresee the evil consequences. Nor did Ja'far, it seems, foresee that his earlier move to create dissension in the army might have become known and have turned the leaders of the mutiny against him. But he was determined to carry out his mission and went to hand over the King's letter to Bakr in person. The text of the letter follows:¹

Dear Bakr Sidqi,

This letter [will be] handed over to you by Sayyid Ja'far al-Askari who, coming to you in a special manner, will discuss [with you] the situation. I have just been informed that three [*sic*] bombs have been dropped [on Baghdad] by some aeroplanes; I was much surprised at this new action since I have already informed you on the telephone of the necessity of stopping any further action until I [could] deal with the present position. Any further movement [on the part of the army] would inevitably have the worst effects on the future of the country and the reputation of the army, for there is absolutely no necessity for such action. Further details will be given to you by Ja'far.

Ghazi,
Commander-in-Chief.

29 October 1936.

The news of Ja'far's departure reached Bakr before his arrival. This peaceful move was therefore construed as another attempt to oppose the coup d'état. Bakr suddenly became furious and decided to get rid of Ja'far. He asked for volunteers from among the army officers who were willing to intercept Ja'far and kill him. No one had the courage to shoot the beloved Minister of Defence, but this did not stop Bakr—he at once gave military orders to four army officers who were bound to obey their commander. Ja'far was accosted on his way to see Bakr, was stopped, taken down a side road, and shot by the four officers.² The letter which Ja'far brought with him was taken to Bakr, who read it in disgust, crumpled it up, and threw it aside.

Ja'far's action has been criticized on the ground that he was a member of the Cabinet against which the army had rebelled and

¹ This letter has so far been regarded as a lost document; but the writer, through the kind mediation of Kamil Chadirchi, has been able to obtain a copy of the original from the army officer who picked it up after Bakr Sidqi had crumpled it in anger and thrown it aside.

² Ja'far was buried where he was shot near the old Waziriyah canal, to the north-east of Baghdad; his body remained there until it was removed to the Royal Mausoleum on 4 October 1937, by order of the Midfa'i Cabinet which followed that of Hikmat.

therefore it was too dangerous to go out to meet the army in revolt. Undoubtedly Ja'far had trusted to his popularity among the army officers, but with feelings running high this was not enough to save his life. For Bakr and the army officers it was a matter of life and death, and therefore they could not afford to rule out the possibility of betrayal, more especially in the light of Ja'far's previous contradictory orders.

The writer is of the opinion that Bakr was in the wrong in ruling out the possibility of a diplomatic contact, but contends that the letter should have been sent through a junior officer rather than by Ja'far himself, who thus aroused undue suspicion. Since Ja'far was not a staunch supporter of the Yasin-Rashid Cabinet nor ever an apologist for its policy, his assassination was a political blunder on the part of Bakr. Not only did Ja'far's relatives and friends become the sworn enemies of the coup d'état Government, but also from the very beginning the incident stamped the mark of political crime on the author of a movement that claimed to end the tyranny of a despotic Cabinet. It was an irony of history that Ja'far, who as Iraq's first Minister of Defence in 1921 had worked so hard to create a national army, was the army's first victim when it rose in revolt.

THE ARMY'S ENTRY INTO THE CAPITAL

In spite of all efforts made to stop the army's march on Baghdad, Bakr insisted on entering the capital at the head of his victorious National Reform Force. Rumours had been circulated that the Yasin-Rashid Cabinet, supported by the police, was planning to meet the rebellion by means of stirring up the tribes. The rumours had undoubtedly reached Bakr, who, therefore, wanted to rule out any possibility of resistance. But it was also true that Bakr, the person most instrumental in making the coup d'état a success, aspired to enter the capital amid the applause of the people, who would acclaim him as their saviour. Bakr and some of his forces entered Baghdad at 5 p.m. and paraded down the main street. The army was indeed enthusiastically applauded and the incident marked the end of the crisis; it also put an end to rumours of the possibility of a civil war.¹ Bakr proceeded to the Ministry of the Interior, where Hikmat and his followers met for a final discussion of the new Cabinet.

¹ It is reported that a small garrison remained outside Baghdad for over three days after the formation of the new Cabinet in order to meet any move on the part of the resigning Cabinet.

FORMATION OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT GOVERNMENT

Hikmat was invited to form a new Cabinet immediately after Yasin had tendered his resignation; but he wanted a formal letter to that effect addressed to him from the King, though a verbal invitation was quite sufficient according to Iraqi practice. Hikmat, however, pointed out to the King that the circumstances were 'unusual' and therefore a written invitation was necessary to rule out any possibility that the formation of the new Cabinet might be declared to be unconstitutional. Moreover, when Hikmat heard of Ja'far's departure to meet Bakr he suspected the move and refused, for the moment, to form the new Cabinet. Thus the crisis lasted for a few more hours until the issue was cleared and the army entered the capital in the afternoon. Hikmat insisted nevertheless that the invitation had to be addressed to him in a formal written letter signed by the King before he agreed to form the new Cabinet.

Having received this invitation, Hikmat began with his Ahali and army followers to select the personnel of the new Cabinet. It is reported to the writer that a discussion of the personnel was tentatively made at the time when Hikmat broke the news to the Ahali group of the army's decision to start the rebellion. It was agreed that Hikmat would be the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Abu 't-Timman for Finance, Chadirchi of Economics and Public Works, Abd al-Latif of Defence, and Yusuf Izz ad-Din Ibrahim of Education. But there was no agreement as to the portfolio for Foreign Affairs. It is reported that the army officers had hoped to seek the co-operation of Generals Nuri as-Sa'id and Ja'far al-Askari, but the assassination of the latter upset the plan and created opposition to the new regime from the very beginning. A number of elder politicians were named, and it was finally decided to settle on Dr Naji al-Asil, a diplomat who had once represented King Husayn of Hijaz in London, and was a former Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Iraq. Although politically neutral, he was regarded as generally sympathetic to the Ahali group. It remained to allocate the portfolio of Justice. Hikmat wanted another Shi'i member in his Cabinet (Abu 't-Timman, a leading member of the Ahali group, was the only Shi'i so far). At the instance of Chadirchi, Salih Jabr, a former Cabinet minister and Mutassarrif of Karbala, known for his non-partisanship and straightforwardness, was nominated. Salih Jabr was not at first prepared to join the new Government, and accepted only

after the insistence of Hikmat and after consultation with Yasin al-Hashimi, who advised him to take the position.

It is to be noted that Bakr Sidqi, who played such a prominent role in making the coup d'état a success, did not covet a Cabinet post but was satisfied with the less dignified position of Chief of the General Staff. It is reported that Bakr was offered the portfolio of Defence but declined in favour of his colleague Abd al-Latif Nuri.¹

At 6 a.m. the ceremony of forming the new Cabinet took place and Prime Minister Hikmat made a short speech in which he said:

I want to thank His Majesty the King [for his confidence], and I have no other thing to say now except to ask the noble people of Iraq, who have given us confidence, to go back to normal life. I want to ask also the public officials to fulfil their duties properly and I pray the Almighty to help if we are to fulfil the objective for the attainment of which I came into power.

¹ By offering the portfolio of Defence to Abd al-Latif, Bakr won the confidence of his colleague and collaborator in making the coup d'état a success, while he, as Chief of the General Staff, occupied the key position for effective control of the army.

V I

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT

1936-1937

THE novelty of the procedure, and the masterly fashion in which the coup d'état had been carried out, brought to power a Government of unprecedented popularity and prestige. The leaders of the new regime had at once become a power in the land, feared by enemies and admired by friends and adherents. But the new Government was well aware of the fact that its popularity would soon wane unless the hopes and aspirations of the people were kept alive by the initiation of immediate and spectacular reforms. In his first press conference on 1 November 1936, Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman, having assured the audience of his unswerving intention to carry out his former promises of reform, invited the entire nation to watch closely the conduct of the new Government and to compare its promises with its achievements.

The liberal and progressive elements of the people were in favour of the change and sought, by organizing a great demonstration, both to express popular approval of the new regime and to press for certain liberal demands. A manifesto containing seven points of reform was circulated in the capital two days before the date set for the demonstration. The manifesto demanded: (1) elimination of the effects of past injustice; (2) full strengthening of the army; (3) public amnesty for all political prisoners; (4) freedom for trade unions and newspapers suppressed by former cabinets; (5) improvement of the condition of the poor, provision of work for the unemployed, and encouragement of local industries; (6) co-ordination of the various popular movements in the Arab countries in order to ensure progress; (7) equality of rights for all Iraqis; maintenance of the internal unity of Iraq; and the spread of cultural and health measures all over Iraq. On 3 November 1936 the demonstration began by holding a preliminary meeting at the celebrated Haydar Khanah Mosque where incendiary speeches were made. As the gathering was rapidly growing, the excited crowd started to parade through the capital from north to south with occasional outbursts and shouts of 'Long live the King', 'Long live the Army', and 'Long live the People's Cabinet'. But the

most impressive and dramatic features of the demonstration were the tribal folk-dancing and the national and folk songs which the more excited portion of the crowd performed and sang as it paraded down the main street of Baghdad.

In the course of his subsequent interviews and declarations the Prime Minister gave more lavish promises, including the seven points set forth in the foregoing manifesto; but the most important general statement of policy so far made was given by Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, Minister of Finance, on behalf of the Government, in his broadcast on 5 November 1936. This speech, which was both an apologia for the method used in the formation of the new Government and a statement of policy, is of particular interest and therefore deserves to be quoted in full:¹

The Prime Minister has deputed me to make a short statement on the recent development in the country and on the policy of the [new] Government.

1. The exceptional circumstances which compelled your sincere brothers to co-operate with the gallant army officers arose from the despotic policy of the [former] Government whose conduct in violating the law and the constitution has exceeded the limits of [the most] despotic rulers, in such matters as causing bloodshed, suppressing liberties, and closing down liberal papers in some cases even before publication, and persecuting liberals everywhere. The country has indeed passed through a period [of despotism] which she has never witnessed before, a period of martial law in which the prisons were crowded with your brothers and sons on the slightest suspicion.

The despotic acts of the former Government and its arbitrary measures were not committed for the sake of public reforms, but merely for partial, nepotic, and personal ends. Such conduct has caused general dissatisfaction throughout the country and hastened the coming of the day of reckoning when the leaders of the National Reform Force asked His Majesty the King to entrust His Excellency Sayyid Hikmat Sulayman with the formation of a [new] Government to realize the desires and aspirations of the people. The leaders of the National Reform Force [have been prompted to do so], because they were aware of the difficulties and sacrifices, persecution and humiliation, which Hikmat and his colleagues have endured for the sake of the country's interests. The [former] cabinet, not satisfied with arbitrary and despotic rule, destructive and punitive measures, declaring martial law and exiling and sending to prison [liberals], did not leave office before making heavy inroads on the Treasury—most of the instalments were not paid on the due date which endangered [the carrying out] of [public] schemes.

¹ *al-Ahali*, 6 November 1936.

2. The Government which has now been formed in accordance with the people's wishes will endeavour to preserve peace, security, and tranquillity, as well as to administer justice to all. Every citizen of this country should know that the Government, having put an end to the period of persecution, transgression, and suppression of liberties, is anxious to take all possible steps to respect life, property, liberty, religious rites and places of worship, without distinction of religion or creed.

3. The Government will [also] aim at promoting the friendly relations [of Iraq] with [the other] countries in general, and the neighbouring countries in particular; the bonds of friendship with the Arab countries will be strengthened, and co-operation with them in all matters promoted.

4. It is [also] one of the Government's decisions to draw up a general and sound plan for the reform of the system of education, and the encouragement of the spirit of culture which will ensure the unity of Iraq, but will not be inconsistent with the realization of Arab unity, in order to put an end to [internal] schisms and antagonisms.

The Government has decided to provide money for the improvement of land in general; it proposes to distribute uncultivated Government land, which is not privately held or leased, among the citizens of this country on the basis of public interest, taking into consideration in particular the custom and usage of the country; it intends to open new roads, improve the system of irrigation, encourage agriculture, commerce, and industry, improve [public] health, and promote other vital schemes which are necessary for the happiness and welfare of all the people.

To sum up, we do not intend to indulge in talking, since actions speak louder than words. If the Government is to carry out reforms properly, it will do so only with the unshaken confidence and support of the people. However great the responsibilities of the Government towards the country may be, the obligations of the people are [still] greater.

This speech aroused great interest in the press and in Baghdad political circles; it was indeed received with over-credulous acclamation by the liberal and progressive elements, while the conservative and nationalist groups received it with a certain apprehension and distrust. The minister's silence about Arab national aspirations, and his casual reference to Arab unity, were regarded by the opposition as ample grounds for attack;¹ while the reference to the distribution

¹ *al-Istiqlal*, an opposition paper, commented in an article issued on the day following the broadcast of the minister's speech that 'the traditional policy of Iraq is nationalistic and, therefore, the new Government ought to follow that same policy' (see 'National Problems and the Policy of the Cabinet', *al-Istiqlal* (Baghdad) 6 November 1936). In its issue of 16 November 1936 *al-Istiqlal* dealt more extensively with the speech and severely criticized it on the points which touched on the conduct of the former Cabinet.

of lands aroused the hostility of the landlords and tribal shaykhs, who did not fail to label the new regime as communistic.

Criticism at home and abroad alleging that the new Government was not sufficiently nationalistic forced the Prime Minister, much to the dislike of his colleagues, to give lavish promises to the nationalists and to assure them of the strong Arab national character of his Government. Probably the Prime Minister gave such promises for reasons of expediency, but later, under pressure from the nationalists, he gradually became more convinced by nationalist demands than by the socio-economic proposals of his Ahali colleagues.

In the programme which the Government had already promised to publish before the general elections, much controversy had taken place in the Cabinet before it was possible to reach an agreement on its final text. Hikmat had sought to satisfy the various shades of opinions, from his leftist Ahali or Reformists (as they now called themselves) to the right nationalists. He also intended to conciliate British opinion, since the British press had expressed apprehension regarding the attitude of the new Government towards Great Britain.

The programme was formally published on 9 December 1936, one day before the order to hold general elections was issued. It is hardly necessary to reproduce the text, but a summary of its crowded provisions will give an idea of its scope and contents.¹ (1) The programme dealt with foreign policy. Friendly relations with Great Britain, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan were stressed, and in particular the proposed pact of non-aggression with the three latter States was mentioned. Co-operation and friendly relations with the other Arab countries were emphasized, and a reference was made to the signing of a treaty of alliance with Saudi Arabia. (2) The programme promised more sweeping and extensive reforms in the internal affairs of Iraq. In Government administration it aimed at raising the standard of efficiency by recruiting abler and better educated young men, but with due regard to their moral background and integrity. It also promised to apply the same principle in municipal administration, in public health, and in the courts. With regard to the tribal section of the population, the programme sought to hasten the settlement of the tribes by distributing lands among them, settling the boundary disputes of their estates, and by extending various other public services to them. (3) The programme dealt with the economic and

¹ Official text in *Programme of the Sulayman Cabinet* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1936).

financial development of Iraq. It promised reforms in the taxation system, encouragement of foreign trade, and stimulation of infant industries. It also promised to pay attention to the condition of labour by founding trade unions, to the development of agriculture, irrigation, transport, and other economic possibilities. (4) The re-organization and the expansion of the army and air force and the encouragement of the martial spirit throughout the country. (5) The development of the educational system, popularization of culture, and improvement of the rural and industrial education. Public education was to be free up to the secondary stages.

It is to be noted that the programme tended to be encyclopaedic in its scope, and left almost nothing untouched in the public life of Iraq. Such extensive promises of reform were beyond the capacity of any Government in Iraq to carry out, and virtually needed herculean powers to be fulfilled within one generation. The tendency to give lavish promises of reform, it will be recalled, was not without precedent in Iraq; for almost all Cabinets had drawn up such comprehensive programmes, which reflected hopes and aspirations rather than the capacity of achievement. But the Government of the coup d'état, with its initial prestige and popularity, needed no pretentious platform and could have published a more specific and concise statement of its policy. The Reformists, it seems, were interested only in stressing the specific social and economic reforms, but expediency had induced the Cabinet to announce a programme which was meant to satisfy every shade of opinion. The inherent weakness of such a platform lies in its divergent, though not inconsistent, provisions, which were meant to satisfy both Reformists and nationalists; but in practice each group criticized it on the points which were to satisfy its opponents. The Reformists were not enthusiastic enough about its nationalistic items; the nationalists criticized its liberalism; and the reactionaries attacked its 'communistic' provisions regarding the distribution of lands.

THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE OPPOSITION

From the very establishment of the new regime rumours were circulated that the leaders of the former Government would be killed and their followers arrested. Such confusing and disturbing news was damaging indeed to the reputation of the new Government, because it created insecurity and aroused the suspicion of the people, who feared the beginning of a regime of anarchy rather than of a new

period of order and justice. But the rumours were no idle talk of irresponsible enemies of the new regime; they were rather the result of the deliberate policy of General Bakr Sidqi and his entourage who, having successfully overthrown the former Government, decided to rid the country of its leaders and adherents. The General, it seems, was also afraid of an attempt on his life by friends and supporters of the former regime; he, therefore, sought his own personal security by trying to eliminate every possible source of trouble.

The Prime Minister and his Reformist colleagues, however, were not prepared to go thus far, since they feared that such a vindictive policy would lead to a reign of terror. Moreover, the Reformists argued that, as a matter of principle, they did not believe in assassination. This attitude of the Reformists, as Chadirchi intimated to the writer, was one of the possible reasons which led to the subsequent disagreement between Bakr and that group.

A compromise was, however, temporarily reached and it was decided to deport the leading personalities of the former Cabinet to neighbouring countries. Yasin and Rashid Ali, who passed two days in anxiety and fear, were escorted by the police and deported to Syria on 30 October 1936; while General Nuri as-Sa'id, who had sought refuge at the British Embassy, fled to Egypt in a British military plane on 31 October.¹ Other victims of the coup d'état were either immediately deported or later forced to leave the country.

While the exodus of the leaders and adherents of the former Government had the apparent effect of relieving the new Government of possible embarrassment at home, it afforded the *émigrés* in exile an opportunity of starting resistance movements both by arousing the governments and press of the various Arab countries against the alleged anti-nationalist regime in Iraq, and by inspiring and encouraging their friends and followers at home to intrigue against the new Government. The immediate effect of the activities of the *émigrés* was the initial hostile attitude which the nationalist papers in the Arab countries assumed towards the coup d'état Government.

In these circumstances the new Government was compelled to

¹ The Government issued the following official statement on 31 October 1936: 'Whereas it is the duty of the Government to do everything necessary to preserve peace and order, to ensure that public tranquility is maintained, Yasin al-Hashimi, Nuri as-Sa'id, and Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, have left the country. The Government desires that public interest should be the chief concern of all, and, to achieve this aim all personal interest must be eliminated' (*Iraq Times* (Baghdad) 31 October 1936).

assure the Governments of the neighbouring Arab countries of its pro-Arab tendencies as well as to start counter-propaganda by inviting writers and editors from Syria and Egypt to visit Baghdad in order to report to their papers what they had actually found for themselves under the new regime. The Egyptian correspondent, Mahmud Abu al-Fath, interviewed General Bakr Sidqi on 7 November 1936, and on the following day an article in support of the coup d'état was published in the *Misri* paper of Cairo. The famous Lebanese writer and correspondent of *Sawt al-Ahrar*, Yusuf Yazbuk, arrived in Baghdad on 11 November 1936, and made an extensive study of the new regime. Apart from the series of articles which he sent to Beirut, Yazbuk published a most readable, but uncritical, account of the coup d'état in which he expounded in forceful language the reasons which prompted the leaders of the new Government to overthrow the former regime. The title of his work is 'The Liberators'¹. From Damascus two correspondents arrived in Baghdad in November, Umar as-Sa'igh, of the *Insha'* paper, and Nassuh Babil, editor of *Ayyam*. Both of them reported to Damascus that the 'Hikmat Cabinet' was as nationalistic as any Cabinet in Iraq could be. On 16 November 1936 Umar reported to Damascus the following statement which Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman had apparently made to satisfy the Arab nationalists: 'The Arab cause is our own greatest cause. . . . I want our brothers in the sister Arab countries to rest assured that under no circumstance shall we forget them. . . .'²

The Government dealt less gently with its opponents at home than those abroad. At the outset the Prime Minister declared that he was not going to restrict the freedom of the press and he actually invited newspaper men, in his first press conference on 1 November 1936, to criticize his Government. But when the opposition papers defended the leaders of the former Government and warned their readers of the dangers of 'changes made overnight',³ the Prime Minister could not swallow such a cryptic remark. The attitude of the *Istiqlal*, *Iraq*, and

¹ Yusuf Ibrahim Yazbuk, *al-Muharrirun* (Beirut, Itihad Press, 1936).

² The Prime Minister commissioned Rafael Butti, editor of *al-Bilad* and a well-known writer, with the task of making a cultural tour in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Rafael was beyond all comparison the ablest newspaper man in Iraq; his commission had therefore the obvious effect of giving the impression in the foreign press that the most influential editor in Baghdad was in favour of the new Government. Rafael left Baghdad on 12 November 1936, and during his leisurely tour was able to contact a number of newspaper men and writers, and had time to give public lectures in Damascus, Beirut, and Cairo.

³ See *al-Istiqlal*, 4 November 1936.

Tariq papers had become increasingly hostile to the new regime when the liberal papers, such as *Ahali*, *Haris*, and *Anba'*, initiated a vigorous attack on Yasin and Rashid and the latter two papers abused them in the most vulgar terms.¹ This personal attack induced *Istiqlal* to reply in like manner and to suggest that if the members of the former Cabinet were guilty, then why not 'try them'?²

The attitude of the opposition papers apparently exhausted the patience of the Prime Minister who, in his press conference on 12 November 1936, did not conceal his dissatisfaction with the attitude of *Istiqlal* and said, appealing to the conscience of its editor: 'I want to ask you . . . to go out of Baghdad [in the country] in order to see for yourself if anything has been done there by those whom you are defending . . . and I want you to find out the actual situation and then you will not be asked to write save what you want in the light of your own conscience.'³ The controversy in the press reached its culmination when *Istiqlal* published a long leader on 16 November 1936, in which it severely criticized the speech of the Minister of Finance, given on 5 November 1936.⁴ This attack eventually forced the Government to suppress not only that paper but also other hostile papers such as *Tariq* and *Iraq*.

The Government also sought to rid the administration of officials whose allegiance to the former regime was notorious and they were replaced by persons more favourable to the new regime. This reflected the dominance of the spirit of the 'spoils system', which existed under former regimes. The Government of the coup d'état, which had promised the raising of the administrative efficiency and moral, followed the same method of transfer and dismissal on the grounds of political allegiance. Moreover, under the threat of dismissal or intimidation by army officers, a number of senior officials resigned. Others resigned in protest against the arbitrary conduct of Bakr or his army officers. The most important resignations were those of Rustum Haydar, Chief of the Royal *Diwan*; Mahmud Subhi ad-Daftari, Director-General of municipalities; and Ali Mumtaz, Director-General of public accounts. Such coercive measures, which were intended to

¹ See *al-Haris* (Baghdad) 12 November 1936; *al-Anba'* (Baghdad) 7 November 1936.

² *al-Istiqlal*, 12 November 1936.

³ *al-Haris*, 13 November 1936.

⁴ See 'A Word on the Policy of the New Cabinet', *al-Istiqlal*, 16 November 1936 (a leader in six columns covering the whole front page of that paper). See also replies to that article in *Ahali*, 18 November 1936; and *al-Haris*, 19 and 20 November 1936.

liquidate opposition, added insecurity to the already existing spirit of discontent among public officials.

THE ELECTIONS AND THE NEW PARLIAMENT

When the coup d'état occurred on 29 October Parliament was not in session, but was supposed to meet on 1 November 1936, when it had completed its summer recess. The Government of the coup d'état, in order to get rid of a Parliament which was the creation of the Yasin-Rashid regime, decided to dissolve it and to have elected a Chamber of Deputies more favourable to the new regime. A royal *iradah* was therefore issued on 31 October, one day before Parliament was to meet, in which it was stated:

Whereas constitutional principles demand that there should be full co-operation between the Executive and the Legislature, and whereas such co-operation must be fully maintained at the present time to enable the Cabinet to carry out the reforms now contemplated, and whereas, in the Cabinet's view, such co-operation does not exist between it and the present Chamber of Deputies, we have therefore issued our *iradah*, in accordance with Article 26 of the constitution and in pursuance of the decision of the Council of Ministers, for the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the holding of new elections. . . .

The legality of the dissolution of Parliament was questioned on the grounds that the constitution permitted dissolution only when there was disagreement between Parliament and the Cabinet, when the latter, appealing to the electorate, would dissolve Parliament for a final decision. Since Parliament was not in session and its attitude towards the new regime was not formally declared, its dissolution was therefore contrary to the constitution.¹ This, however, was no innovation in the constitutional practice of Iraq, but had many precedents, and no decision had been taken by the Iraqi High Court against such a practice.² The Government of the coup d'état, seeking sweeping reforms as it had promised, would naturally try to appeal directly to the electorate in order to give an apparently legal basis for the change which had been effected through a military coup d'état. The new Government, however, was neither frank nor courageous enough to

¹ See Suwaydi's criticism in a letter sent in reply to a question raised by A. R. al-Hasani. See text in al-Hasani's *Tarikh al-Wazarat al-Iraqiyah* (Sidon, 1940) vol. 4, pp. 215–16.

² Both General Nuri as-Sa'id and Ali Jawdat had dissolved Parliament during its recess in 1930 and 1934.

say so; but timidly resorted to the same traditional pretext which had often been given for former dissolutions.

By the time the general elections were held, relations between Bakr and the Reformists began to deteriorate. The Reformists, counting on their popularity among the liberals as well as the rank and file of the people, suggested trying out the experiment of 'free' elections; but to this neither Hikmat or Bakr would agree, fearing that free elections might return a number of deputies favourable to the former regime, and especially unfavourable to a Cabinet which had swept into power through a military coup d'état. Under the influence both of his own entourage and the nationalists, General Bakr Sidqi's suspicion was aroused against the Reformists and consequently he went so far as to prevent their extremists from winning any seat in Parliament. Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman and Abu 't-Timman, Minister of Finance and a moderate but very influential Reformist, intervened and persuaded Bakr to change his mind in the interest of the cause for which they had so assiduously worked. The elections, accordingly, had to be held on a compromise basis in order to satisfy Bakr and the army, the Reformists, tribal shaykhs, personal desires of Cabinet ministers, and the interests of certain pressure groups. The general elections, which were ordered to be held on 10 December 1936, were not completed until 20 February 1937. Parliament was formally opened a week later.

The new Chamber of Deputies, composed of 108 deputies, was different from its predecessors in many respects. Only one-third of the former Chamber were returned, while the majority of the other two-thirds had never before been members of Parliament. Thus the deputies who had been staunch supporters of the former regime were excluded from the new Chamber, and the number of tribal shaykhs was also reduced. Of the new elected Chamber, at least thirty seats were given to Bakr's own nominees, while hardly a dozen were allotted to the Reformists. A number of nationalist and anti-Reformist deputies were also returned who, while they unmistakably supported the new Government, stood avowedly against its Reformist members. No wonder, therefore, that the Reformists were somewhat disappointed with the results of the elections, but nevertheless they did not entirely lose hope and they decided to stand firmly together in the new Chamber in order to influence legislation by their liberal ideas. The Senate, being an appointed body, remained as it had been in the former regime; but its President for the new session, Shaykh

Muhammad Rida ash-Shabibi, was elected for his favourable attitude towards the new regime.

On 27 February 1937 Parliament met in an extraordinary session, since ordinary sessions were usually held on 1 November, and the King addressed both Houses in a joint session. The Speech from the Throne promised the inauguration of a new period of reforms and listed a number of urgent measures which the Government had decided to carry out during the current year. It also reminded Parliament of its duty to consider those measures as well as others in the light of experience and reason.¹

When the new Chamber of Deputies set to work, a few members, both Reformists and nationalists, were able to influence their Chamber, under the cloak of public interest, to inaugurate vindictive legislation against public men of the former regime. In the midst of public excitement a general proposal was made, in the second sitting of the Chamber on 6 March 1937, to the effect that a committee of investigation was to be set up to examine the sources of income by means of which certain ex-ministers and senior officials had accumulated large fortunes through political influence. Some of the deputies who supported the proposal were prompted to do so by a genuine sense of public interest; but the motive of most of its authors was revenge. Though it was severely and ably criticized from a juridical point of view by Yusuf al-Kabir (Jewish deputy for Baghdad), the proposal was nevertheless passed by a majority.² When, however, the excitement subsided, actual legislation for carrying out the proposal was never made, since it had been found that various practical difficulties would have hindered its application.

Another rash proposal made during the public excitement was also not translated into reality. It was made by a few admirers, if not flatterers, of the military hero of the coup d'état, General Bakr Sidqi, in deference to his military ability and his contribution to making the coup a success. The proposal, made on 28 April 1937, was in the form of a request to the Government to commemorate the General's public services by erecting a statue to him in one of the capital's public squares and to offer to him a residence for his own personal use, since his income was limited. The proposal could have been made in a less personal form as a tribute to the whole army by

¹ For text of the speech see Government of Iraq, *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 7th (Extraordinary) Session, 1937, pp. 1-2.

² See speeches in favour and against the proposal, *ibid.* pp. 94-7.

honouring its leader. In the form in which it was proposed Bakr's opponents were not unnaturally jealous. They were therefore pleased when Abd al-Latif Nuri, Minister of Defence and co-author of the coup d'état, blocked the measure by arguing that he was himself no less worthy of such an honour than Bakr. In order to avoid dissension, Bakr declared, with a proper display of public spirit, that if such an honour were ever to be made, it ought to be made to the entire army rather than to his own person. As to the offer of a residence, Bakr amused his adversaries by declaring that he needed no such a place since he had always regarded his shelter to be under a gun! Bakr's declaration was reiterated by the Prime Minister in the Chamber and consequently the proposal was gracefully withdrawn.

When the new Chamber sat to deliberate on the Government's reform programme, the deputies were naturally divided into two main camps. First, there were the Reformists and their adherents who avowedly supported liberal legislation and pressed for a more advanced policy on the part of the new Government. Secondly, there were the nationalists, the conservative elements, and the tribal shaykhs, who invariably opposed liberal legislation. The Reformist position was probably best stated by Hadid who, in his maiden speech on 6 March 1937, briefly but clearly described the economic situation in Iraq and explained the underlying causes of the country's backwardness. He regarded the chief cause of backwardness as agricultural, and he therefore contended that the most urgent reforms were those dealing with agrarian problems. 'Poverty, land disputes, feudalism, political strife, and many other problems, are all due to economic factors which, in Iraq, are basically agricultural.'¹

Disagreement between the Reformists and their adversaries was manifested in the course of debate on almost all important legislation. It was indeed most evident during the debate on the budget; the controversy in one of the sittings took the form of a verbal duel between Hadid and Salman Shaykh Da'ud, and ended in an exchange of abuse between the two protagonists of the contending camps.

The attack on the Reformists turned on one cardinal principle, that is, whether the new Government's policy was to be Communist or nationalist. Matters came to a head in connexion with the debate on the new land policy. Both in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies the proposed land policy was criticized for its alleged Communist

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 7th (Extraordinary) Session, 1937· pp. 18-19.

objective. Basically, the new land policy in the main threatened the vested interests of the landowners and tribal shaykhs. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance declared in the most reassuring terms, in both Houses of Parliament, that there was no question of taking land from the owners to be distributed among the peasants; there was, they asserted, enough Government land, never owned or claimed by any individual which they intended to give to the peasants.¹

The landowners and tribal shaykhs were never satisfied with such pious declarations, since the whole Reformist philosophy was condemned as dangerous to their own socio-economic position. They were not prepared in fact to accept any policy short of complete abandonment of Reformist ideas. The landlords were able to arouse the hostility of the nationalist deputies against their Reformist colleagues in Parliament on the grounds of their Communist ideas, and played on the religious sentiment of the conservatives on the pretext of the Reformist irreligious ideology. Both Hikmat and his Reformists exhausted their powers of argument in trying to assure Parliament and the nation that they were not Communist, but to no avail. Finally, Hikmat was forced to choose either to drop or to sink with the Reformists. As will be described in a later section, Hikmat chose to save his ship by dropping Jonah.

In spite of strife between the liberal Reformists and the conservative nationalists, the Parliament of the coup d'état was able to pass forty-five bills either as new laws, amendments to existing laws, or as approval of decrees issued before it met. Having completed its annual four months' session (27 February 1936—20 June 1937), it adjourned never to meet again, since it was dissolved by the new Cabinet formed after the fall of Hikmat Sulayman's Cabinet.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF THE ARMY OFFICERS

Bakr's sudden and unexpected coup had come as a surprise to almost all the army officers, though they were not unprepared for the idea of the army's eventual intervention in politics. The army indeed was much impressed by the masterly fashion and complete secrecy in which the coup was carried out. It was regarded as an admirable military feat, and for a time most of the army officers thought that

¹ See *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 1937, pp. 22, 23–4; and *Proceedings of the Senate*, 1937, pp. 6–7. For a brief and clear statement of the Government's land policy, see an article by 'Fairplay', 'Land Policy in Iraq', *Iraq Times*, 7 December 1936, p. 3.

their immediate national objective had at last been achieved. The Iraqi army, it will be recalled, had for long cherished the idea of establishing a military dictatorship in Iraq after the fashion of Turkey and Persia, but the more nationalist among them regarded such a military regime only as a means of realizing the pan-Arab dream.

Bakr, however, had already committed himself to a promise that his sole object in leading the revolt was to overthrow the Yasin-Rashid regime and that he had no intention of controlling the political machine. He had, it seems, feared the reaction of the people to the army's intervention in politics, and therefore he had declared on more than one occasion that once the new regime was established the army was to withdraw, leaving the administration in the hands of the politicians. Abd al-Latif Nuri, the Minister of Defence and co-author of the coup, had endorsed Bakr's declarations and assurances and was a firm believer in, though not quite capable of, restraining the army officers from indulging in political activities.

Bakr's followers, however, whose number had greatly increased after the coup, were scarcely satisfied with merely overthrowing the former regime; in one respect such an action would have virtually meant the surrender of the army's long cherished ideal of military dictatorship. It has been reported to the writer that Bakr's followers often pleaded with him, playing on his vanity, to take over control of the Government rather than leave it in the hands of unworthy 'Communists'. Thus Bakr's political ambitions were aroused and he was persuaded to let the army indulge in political activities,¹ though he did not himself take the initiative.

Very soon a small committee of Bakr's most intimate and reliable supporters was organized and held secret meetings in order to lay the foundations of a programme of action. The most prominent members of the committee were Muhammad Ali Jawad, Ali Ghalib, Jamal Jamil, and Mustafa Ali. The committee included both Arab and Kurdish elements and aimed at uniting the Arabs and Kurds in order to create a strong Iraqi nation. It repudiated the idea of the pan-Arab nationalists which aimed solely at realizing the pan-Arab dream; it rather contended that its national objective was, as reported to the writer by Mustafa Ali, 'first, reform from within, and then co-operation abroad'. The committee recommended that military

¹ This was reported to the writer by a number of persons who knew Bakr. Mustafa Ali, then deputy and intimate friend of Muhammad Ali Jawad and a follower of Bakr, had confirmed this point of view.

dictatorship was the best form of Government for Iraq, with General Bakr Sidqi at its head.¹ While the scheme of the committee was intended to introduce drastic reforms in the country, its members were quite prepared to carry out their proposals by force and intimidation, not even excluding the possibility of assassinating those who would stubbornly oppose the scheme. The general outline and procedure of the plan were embodied in a secret memorandum which Mustafa Ali had prepared for Bakr, but which remained only on paper, save for several cases of intimidation designed to weaken opposition to the army's political activities.

Bakr's party was attacked by the pan-Arabists on the grounds of championing the cause of the Kurds against the interests of the Arabs. This was partly due to Bakr's Kurdish origin, but mainly because his followers had not avowedly and immediately begun to work for the pan-Arab cause, and they were thus branded as anti-Arab. In point of fact, however, the majority of Bakr's entourage were Arabs; and to do Bakr justice, he had proved to be a supporter rather than an antagonist of the Arab nationalist movement long before the First World War.² After the coup d'état Bakr often reiterated his support of the Arab national cause.³ A few enthusiastic Kurdish nationalists, it is true, had taken the opportunity of the coup and secretly issued letters and pamphlets in which they ostensibly pleaded for co-operation between Arabs and Kurds, but in fact demanded freedom for the Kurdish people.⁴ These, however, had neither been originally inspired nor were they subsequently supported by Bakr.

The real weakness of Bakr's party, however, lay not so much in its ideology, which indeed had a fairly wide appeal, but in the conduct and character both of its leader and of his intimate followers. Bakr Sidqi himself was praised for his courage and he had a shrewd sense

¹ The writer, in the course of an interview with a few of Bakr's followers, raised the question as to the fate of Hikmat in the army's proposed political scheme. The answer was invariably that Hikmat was quite willing to serve as minister under Bakr. When asked by the writer to comment on this point, Hikmat said it was an absurd idea and he would never have approved of it.

² There are very few who still remember or admit that Bakr was one among a few nationalists in Baghdad before the First World War who championed the cause of the oppressed Arabs against the Turks. See a telegram, signed by Bakr and other Arab nationalists in Baghdad, sent in support of the first Arab Conference in Paris held in 1913 (Muhib ad-Din al-Khatib, ed., *al-Mu'tamar al-Arabi al-Awwal* [Cairo, 1913] pp. 204–6).

³ See Bakr's letter to Yusuf Yazbuk in *al-Bilad*, 15 November 1936.

⁴ See *The Kurds and Arabs*, edited by a few Kurdish young men (Baghdad, Nahaj Press, 1937).

of humour. He could be genial and charming, but he was often rude and he was ruthless with his enemies. He was not endowed with much political wisdom, nor had he the gift of vivid and stirring oratory, though he was often able to play on the emotions of his army officers by his outspoken attack on British imperialism. Bakr was not in fact a natural leader, and was often suspected of egotistical motives on account of his petty intrigues against army officers. He was indeed alarmed by his sudden eminence and was mentally unprepared for the role which he was inevitably asked to play.

Bakr's entourage comprised both army officers and civilians who, though shrewd and ambitious, were very inexperienced young men. They were uncompromisingly anti-democratic, if not truly dictatorial in spirit; they were, therefore, naturally opposed to the Reformists and sought, through their influence on Bakr, to force them (i.e. the Reformists) to withdraw from the Government. They were also opposed to the pan-Arabists, and thus failed to unite all the army officers. In trying to follow such a narrow policy they lost support from both the Reformist and nationalist ranks; and their reputation among the people declined owing to their outrages and over-indulgence in the cafés and cabarets of Baghdad. Their sole source of strength was the prestige and power of Bakr; and after his assassination they were left almost powerless and with very few followers.

The nationalist army officers, inspired by the pan-Arabists on the one hand and by leaders of the former regime on the other, became more active again when Bakr's followers lost prestige. A number of groupings were secretly organized; some of them were in close touch with Colonel Fawzi Qawuqchi and the Muthanna Club;¹ others were actively encouraged and directed by exiled political opponents of the Government; and still others were aroused by the dissenting Reformists who resigned in protest against the arbitrary Bakr-Hikmat policy. The political activities of the nationalist army officers were by no means co-ordinated; nor indeed were there well-organized groupings, which again reflected lack of leadership. There were, however, a number of adventurous army officers who were genuinely opposed to the Bakr-Hikmat regime and determined to put an end to it even at the risk of assassinating Bakr. Various attempts on Bakr's life were made but failed until the elaborate one of August 1937 succeeded. The story of Bakr's assassination will be told in a later section; but it

¹ A pan-Arab society formed in 1935 in Baghdad for the promotion of the Arab nationalist movement.

is important to note here how helpless Bakr's entourage became when their leader had disappeared.

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONALISTS

The nationalist ideology, it will be recalled, was based on the pan-Arab dream; and it had become a traditional policy for Iraq to work for the realization of that ideal. The Government of the coup d'état had not shown from the outset that enthusiasm for pan-Arabism which was so characteristic of the Yasin-Rashid regime, chiefly owing to the influence of the Reformists, whose main interests lay in other directions, and to Bakr's followers who were determined to set up a military dictatorship in Iraq before anything else. Hikmat, with his traditional Turkish background, was at heart not a firm believer in pan-Arabism, while Bakr, with his alleged Kurdish sympathies, supported the aspirations of his followers.

The moderate nationalists, however, were not opposed either to Hikmat or Bakr, but saw grave danger in their co-operation with the Reformists. They therefore tried from the very beginning to bring about dissension between the Reformists and the army. The majority of the moderate nationalists, it is true, had deplored the fall of the former regime, but to their surprise they soon found that both Hikmat and Bakr were quite ready to support their ideology. They therefore came to the conclusion that the Hikmat-Bakr administration, after the fall of the Reformists, had virtually become as nationalist as any former Cabinet had been. Only those nationalists who were intimate friends and followers of Yasin, Nuri, and Rashid remained to the end the sworn enemies of the new regime.

The work of the moderate nationalists was indeed far-reaching since they were able not only to contribute to the fall of the Reformists, but were also capable of infusing the reconstructed Hikmat Cabinet, after the resignation of its Reformist members, with an intensely pan-Arab outlook. At the outset their influence was slight, and Bakr sought their support only as a means of weakening the position of the Reformists; but very soon both Bakr and Hikmat realized that the nationalist agitation had a wider appeal to the public than they expected and consequently they could not ignore them. In Parliament the Communist bogey was exploited by such nationalists as Salman Shaykh Da'ud, Arif Qaftan, Mustafa Ali, and Rafael Butti, while both the *Istiqlal* and *Bilad* newspapers published articles on the impending Communist danger. It is reported to the writer that Ali

Mahmud, as representative of the *Istiqlal* group, had an audience with Bakr and promised him the support of his group if the Reformists were dropped. Bakr was naturally prepared to approve this new alignment and was able to influence Hikmat to part with the Reformists for the sake of a stronger and more popular group. On 17 March 1937 Bakr's attitude towards the Reformists was made clear by his public defiance of Communism; he declared: 'The soil of Iraq is unsuitable for Communism . . . those who would try to plant Communism in Iraqi soil would be just as unsuccessful as those who would try to transplant the palm-trees of Basrah to the mountains of Norway!'¹

After his final parting with the Reformists, Hikmat followed the same path as Bakr in making use of violent nationalist declarations to try to strengthen his ever weakening position. Hikmat very shrewdly seized the opportune moment at the time of the publication of the Peel Report on the partition of Palestine. Observing how intensely this had fostered Arab national feeling, he made several inflammatory public declarations in July 1937, in which he violently denounced partition and promised the Palestine Arabs help in their just cause. He also sent a protest to the British Government which gave the Arabs great satisfaction.² His newly reconstructed Cabinet accordingly gained strength, because on the question of Palestine the entire Arab world was opposed to Zionist claims. Even the recalcitrant ultra-nationalists were pleased with Hikmat's declarations though they were by no means satisfied with the Hikmat-Bakr administration.

THE REFORMIST-ARMY ESTRANGEMENT

The Reformists, it will be recalled, agreed to co-operation with the army only on the understanding that once the Yasin-Rashid administration had been overthrown, the army should withdraw from politics. At the outset, it seems, Bakr was quite prepared to live up to his promise had it not been for the influence both of his army officers and of the nationalists.

After the establishment of the new Government, the Reformist leaders were not aware of the army's inherent hostility, but were well aware of the possible opposition of the nationalists and of the

¹ See *al-Bilad*, 18 March 1937.

² *ibid.*, 11 and 12 July 1937. For new light on this point see a statement made by Hikmat in *al-Yanbu'* (Baghdad) 1 June 1946.

reactionary elements. They realized from the very beginning that their strength would depend on the concerted action and the full co-operation of all the liberal and progressive elements. In order to mobilize such elements, it was suggested that a liberal political party should be organized which, it was presumed, would embody the aspirations of a popular movement. As a preliminary step a Popular Reform Society was organized, composed of four members of the Cabinet¹ and a number of deputies and Government officials. The Society officially issued its programme on 15 November 1936, and began to call for action immediately afterwards. The programme called for the State ownership of certain public resources and institutions, and the initiation and control of certain industries. It also advocated distribution of lands among the peasants, and the protection of the rights of the working class by limiting the hours of labour and permitting the organization of trade unions. Though the programme promised co-operation between Iraq and the other Arab countries in foreign policy, it nevertheless aroused the hostility of the nationalists, who believed that this item was inserted in order to appease the Reformists' opponents. Behind the scenes opposition was incited by the landowners and tribal shaykhs who feared that the Society of Popular Reform would become a medium for the propagation of Communism.

Realizing the strength of the opposition, the Reformist leaders sought the backing of the Government and decided to transform their society into a political party. On 9 January 1937 it was announced that a meeting of the Reformist leaders would be held at Abu 't-Timman's house in order to discuss the ways and means of organizing the new party. Permission for forming such a party was officially requested from the Government, but while Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman promised consideration of the request, permission was never actually given. The Prime Minister had verbally promised permission, but under pressure from the army and the nationalists, he was persuaded to ignore the request.

Hikmat was indeed in a very difficult position. He was at the outset sympathetic to the Reformists and sincerely believed in their good intentions and genuine patriotism. He had promised them full support, but requested them to wait until he was able to weaken their reactionary adversaries. Hikmat believed that in due course he would have

¹ They were Abu 't-Timman, Chadirchi, Naji al-Asil, and Yusuf Izz ad-Din Ibrahim.

been able to deal with the situation and counted optimistically on the possibility of a full understanding between Bakr and the Reformists. The turn of events ran contrary to his expectations, since Bakr, under the influence of his entourage and the nationalists, had become increasingly intolerant of the Reformists. The army's support was essential, and Hikmat could not afford to ignore Bakr's desires. He therefore thought it prudent to persuade the Reformists to moderate their demands for popular reforms and to condemn publicly the allegations of Communism. In justice to the Reformists, their leaders as well as their papers again reiterated their denial of any Communist designs and assured the public of the moderation of their reform programme.¹ The Reformists, however, insisted on certain liberal measures which they regarded as essential. Hikmat, who had become more subservient to the army and the nationalists, unconsciously grew bored with the Reformist demands and a natural coolness developed between him and Chadirchi, the most outspoken Reformist of the Cabinet, and then between him and the entire Reformist group. This rift between Hikmat and the Reformists, which at first manifested itself on the question of the general elections, passed through various stages. Abu 't-Timman, owing to his prestige with both Hikmat and the Reformists, always tried to reconcile them and to prevent a final parting. Matters, however, came to a head on the issue of the Diwaniyah uprising when Abu 't-Timman himself disagreed with the Prime Minister and decided to resign, with his Reformist colleagues, from the Hikmat Cabinet.

It is now possible to view in retrospect the causes of the Reformist failure to realize their aspirations when they were in power. It has been argued that the Hikmat Government represented a Popular Front Government. Looked at only from a Reformist point of view, the Government was indeed intended to be a Popular Front after its contemporary French model, and the Reformists actually sought to organize a Popular Front movement in Iraq. While it is true that the new regime in Iraq was not a genuine popular movement, in the sense that it drew its strength from the people, the real danger for the Reformist movement was its unholy alliance with the army, who had for long cherished the ideal of military rule in Iraq and were by no means prepared, once they had seized power, to tolerate the establishment of a Popular Front Government in Iraq.

In the course of one of his conversations with Reformists, the

¹ See *Ahali*, 19 and 23 March 1937.

writer questioned the possibility of achieving liberal reforms through the support of the army. Chadirchi pointed out that as a result of Bakr's pledge he had counted on the army's withdrawal from politics once the coup d'état had been achieved. Bakr might have been sincere in giving that pledge; but, it will be remembered, he was himself bound to take the army's aspirations and desires into consideration. Once it had achieved power, the army was not likely to withdraw from politics; it would rather tend to dominate them.

The Reformist-army alliance, therefore, was false and artificial, since they had nothing in common save their agreement to overthrow the Yasin-Rashid administration. It seems obvious enough that the Iraqi army's ideals and aspirations were far from being liberal. The army officers were intensely nationalist and sought to establish an unmistakable military dictatorship. The Reformists, on the other hand, preached the gospel of liberalism and democracy. Rejoicing in the successful achievement of the alliance, the Reformists could not at first see the impossibility of its survival; but when they fully realized it, they had no other alternative but to dissolve it.

TENSION BETWEEN THE TRIBAL SHAYKHS AND THE GOVERNMENT

Peace had not yet been restored to the tribal areas of the Middle Euphrates when the Government of the coup d'état was set up. Hikmat, who was one of the original promoters of the secret Sulaykh meetings aiming at arousing the tribes in order to force the Ali Jawdat Cabinet to resign, was to bear the evil consequences of that action when he himself came into power. It was indeed no difficult task to arouse the tribes of the Middle Euphrates to revolt, but it was increasingly difficult to control them once they had begun to rebel. The Yasin-Rashid administration, it will be recalled, decided to crush the tribal uprisings by force, but could not pacify the whole area.

When Hikmat had come into power order had not yet been fully restored to the Diwaniyah *liwa* (province). He decided to solve the tribal problem peacefully and sympathetically. He pardoned all those who had revolted during former regimes; and ordered that all confiscated property of the rebels was to be restored. Both Hikmat and Bakr made an extensive tour in the Diwaniyah *liwa* in February 1937, and gave audience to the shaykhs and tribal chiefs in order to impress them with the sincerity and good faith of the new Government. The Prime Minister made several public speeches promising reforms, and

asked the tribes to keep order by appealing to their sense of patriotism and reminding them of their contribution to the establishment of the national Government of Iraq by their revolt of 1920. Money as well as landed property was distributed among tribal shaykhs, both friends and enemies of the new regime, in order to win their loyalty to the Government.

There were, however, a number of difficulties to be tackled before Hikmat could claim to have solved the tribal problem. The tribes of the Middle Euphrates were susceptible to anti-Government propaganda owing to their miserable socio-economic conditions which kept them invariably discontented. Hikmat was fully aware of that situation and consequently tried to introduce land reforms in order to ameliorate conditions. But the Government's new land policy, while it aimed at benefiting the rank and file of the tribes, was bitterly opposed by the tribal shaykhs who feared both the eventual confiscation of their lands and the liberation of the peasants from their control.

The Government, therefore, had either to abandon its new land policy or to force the tribal shaykhs to approve it. At the outset General Bakr Sidqi was in favour of using force, but Hikmat preferred to attempt persuasion. He assured the shaykhs that their estates were to be left intact and gave lavish promises in return for support of the Government. Salih Jabr, the Minister of Justice, who, as a Shi'i, was *persona grata* to the Middle Euphrates shaykhs, brought such prominent men as Shaykh Abd al-Wahid Sikkar, Alwan al-Yasiri, and Muhsin Abu-Tabikh to a friendly gathering at his house where they had an intimate discussion of their problems with Hikmat and Bakr.¹ Another meeting was held at the Prime Minister's house. The shaykhs claimed that they only opposed the Communist tendencies (and certain arbitrary measures) of the Government.² Hikmat assured them that he had no intention of supporting a Communist policy and promised to reconcile their own interests with those of the Government. There were at that time certain long-standing boundary disputes which former Cabinets had tried to solve, but were unable to without running counter to the interests of the shaykhs. These disputes had arisen more than a decade earlier, and the shaykhs counted on the formation of a friendly Cabinet to make a settlement in their favour. When the Yasin-Rashid Party came into power (who, it will

¹ Based on the writer's interview with Salih Jabr. Cf. Muhsin Abu-Tabikh, *Kitab al-Mabadi' wa ar-Rijal* (Damascus, 1938) pp. 101-4.

² ibid. Cf. Abu-Tabikh. op. cit. p. 104.

be recalled, were supported by these shaykhs) the disputes were settled in their favour. The Hikmat Government, however, declared that this settlement was unjust and must be reconsidered. The shaykhs were naturally not inclined to support a regime which threatened their interests. In the meetings at Salih Jabr's house, however, Hikmat pledged himself to satisfy the interests of the shaykhs, and it seemed as if relations between the shaykhs and the Government were at last reconciled.

Basically, however, the conflict between the new Government and the shaykhs was more important than the question of boundary disputes; the large number of tribal shaykhs with their lieutenants, the *sargals*, feared that, even if their estates were left intact, the land policy of the new Government would undermine their authority over the tribes and would probably lead to an eventual dissolution of the tribal feudal order. Thus at heart the tribal shaykhs would approve nothing short of complete reversal of the new land policy and they threatened an armed uprising when the Government tried to enforce its policy.

To the outside observer it seems strange that the rank and file of the tribes should revolt against a Government which aimed at serving their best interests by liberating them from their masters. The Government's difficulty was that it had no means of coming into direct-contact with the tribesmen, nor could it speak their unsophisticated language; the shaykhs, who had an absolute authority over them, could easily arouse the tribesmen by telling them that the Government wanted only to collect taxes and apply compulsory conscription. Taxes were sometimes relaxed in the interest of peace, but conscription was rigidly enforced, because it was regarded as a principle of national policy and essential to the enlargement of the army. The Government had often been compelled to enforce conscription by force when the opposing tribal shaykhs refused co-operation.

Matters came to a head in May 1937 when the Government decided to strike at an impending tribal uprising in Diwaniyah. It was noticed that the tribal shaykhs had increased their activities in that area and that arms were being secretly distributed among the tribes. Bakr and his general staff decided to strike. Hikmat approved, and decided to arrest the leaders, including those who were members of Parliament.¹ The decision to send forces to Diwaniyah, it seems, was carried

¹ Three leaders were members of Parliament, namely, Senator Muhsin Abu-Tabikh, and deputies Abd al-Wahid Sikkar, and Alwan al-Yasiri. The Prime

out before it was submitted to the Cabinet for approval. When the news of the dispatch of forces reached certain Cabinet ministers, a meeting of the Cabinet was held and the Reformist ministers, together with Salih Jabr, pleaded for conciliation with the tribes. Hikmat and Bakr thought otherwise and had already decided to use force. Salih Jabr sided with the Reformists, who had already made up their mind to withdraw, and four ministers threatened resignation. They actually tendered their resignations on 19 June 1937, and withdrew from the Cabinet. (A full account of these resignations is given in the following section.)

When Hikmat and Bakr arrested the tribal chiefs, the tribes of Samawah (in the Diwaniyah *liwa*) were incensed and the rebellion which was being prepared in secret openly raised its head. There had already been war-dances among tribesmen protesting against compulsory conscription and threatening with their songs: 'Those who impose conscription, let them come!' The resignation of the four ministers had weakened Hikmat's position and he was compelled to promise conciliation with the tribes to the new ministers who joined his reconstructed Cabinet. From May to August the situation did not improve, in spite of Hikmat's appeal to the tribes for conciliation. The fall of Hikmat's Cabinet relieved the tension and the matter was dealt with more peacefully by the subsequent Cabinet.

HIKMAT'S FINAL PARTING WITH THE REFORMISTS

The Reformists, it will be recalled, had long believed that their cause was lost by the collaboration of Hikmat and the army, but their leader, Abu 't-Timman, did not entirely lose hope and counted on his ability to reconcile both Hikmat and Bakr with his colleagues. Matters, however, came to a head on the issue of the Diwaniyah uprising when the fall of the Reformists was effected. This came more quickly than they expected; the Minister of Justice, Salih Jabr, a non-Reformist member of the Cabinet, joined hands with them on the Diwaniyah issue and decided to resign with them. Jabr who, it will be recalled, had worked for the reconciliation of the tribal chiefs with Bakr and Hikmat, had no faith in Bakr and suspected his intentions towards the tribes.

Minister requested Parliament to deprive these leaders of their parliamentary immunity, which was done, and they were put in Government custody at a distance from the area of the revolt. For statements by the Prime Minister to this effect in both Houses of Parliament, see *Proceedings of the Senate*, 1937, pp. 44-6; and *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 1937, pp. 156-8.

Abu 't-Timman, though a moderate leader of the Reformists, emerged as the champion of the schism in the Cabinet and was almost successful in causing the fall of Hikmat's Cabinet by inducing four out of seven members of the Cabinet to resign. He called the opposing ministers to a meeting at his house on 19 June 1937, and the four ministers (Abu 't-Timman, Chadirchi, Salih Jabr, and Yusuf Izz ad-Din Ibrahim) decided to resign. Abu 't-Timman drew up the letter of resignation, which the other three ministers approved, and it was at once sent to the Prime Minister. The text of the letter follows:

His Excellency the Prime Minister,

In view of the fact that the aspirations of the country, for which we have so often made sacrifices, for matters such as welfare, security, and justice for all, have not been realized; and since the proper and peaceful arrangements which we have decided to carry out for the security of the country, which were approved by the public and for long had the good results which the public awaited, have been unfortunately reversed and have led to bloodshed, owing to arrangements which were kept secret to us until it was no longer possible to keep them secret; and since the policy of nepotism has been continued, which is inconsistent with the proper policy which sincere men should follow; we have therefore found that there would no longer be any use in bearing further responsibility and we have [therefore] respectfully decided to resign.

Muhammad Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, Salih Jabr,
Kamil al-Chadirchi, Yusuf Izz ad-Din Ibrahim.

Despite his unsuccessful endeavours to persuade the four ministers to withdraw their letter of resignation, Hikmat did not resign himself, though only three out of seven ministers remained in the Cabinet. He invited several other persons to join his Cabinet and thus it was reconstructed. Ali Mahmud, of the Istiqlal group, was given the portfolio of Justice; Muhammad Ali Mahmud had the portfolio of Finance; Abbas Mahdi took the portfolio of Public Works, and Ja'far Hamandi was given the portfolio of Education. The new ministers agreed to join only on condition that the Cabinet would follow an anti-Reformist policy and would take a more lenient attitude towards the Diwaniyah uprising.

The Istiqlal group and the nationalists had finally won; for the reconstructed Hikmat Cabinet not only repudiated the Reformists' ideas, but Hikmat declared in Parliament in no uncertain terms that his policy was intensely nationalist and that he would persecute those who professed liberal ideas. In order to satisfy the nationalists, Hikmat deported from Iraq Deputy Abd al-Qadir Isma'il (one of his

staunch Reformist supporters), and Isma'il's brother, after having deprived them of their Iraqi nationality. He also promised to dissolve Parliament in order to get rid of its Reformist members. The Popular Reform Society was abolished and the leading members were either banished from the country, as was Chadirchi, or persecuted and disgraced.

Hikmat's final parting with the Reformists meant that the Cabinet had finally become subservient to the army and the nationalists. Since the trend of events was unmistakably to concentrate power in the hands of the army, rumours were circulated about the impending dictatorship of Bakr Sidqi. The doors to supreme authority were thrown open to the army, but proper leadership to achieve effective control was apparently lacking. While many admirers looked upon Bakr as the would-be dictator, he was himself, it seems, reluctant to assume that role. His assassination put an end to the talk of a military dictatorship, though the army's interference in politics continued to be the most important factor in the political life of Iraq.

ASSASSINATION OF BAKR SIDQI

From the day when the coup d'état was successfully carried out, the army officers began to take full advantage of their enhanced prestige. The licentious indulgence of Bakr, and especially of some of his irresponsible entourage, which reminded the older generation of the corruption and outrages of the Turkish army officers under the Ottoman regime, increasingly aroused the disgust and hatred of the people. Some cynical critics remarked that Bakr's entourage had played the role of the modern janizary, by their behaviour. This led to a deterioration of the army's reputation and the waning of Bakr's prestige.

Hikmat's final parting with the Reformists, on the other hand, virtually meant that Bakr and his party had become the supreme authority behind the Government and that Hikmat's remaining in power depended on Bakr's support. Rumours were circulated that Bakr had not only become 'dictator' in fact but was also contemplating becoming it in name. Such rumours, it is true, were mere propaganda; but it is safe to argue that Hikmat, having parted ways with the Reformists and having no genuine support from nationalist ranks, must have fully realized that his power rested entirely on the support of Bakr's party. He was accordingly bound to satisfy Bakr and the army not only by the approval of large financial appropriations

for the strengthening of the army but also by suppressing the alleged Communist movement and expelling from Iraq Abd al-Qadir Isma'il.

Yet it is reported to the writer by a few men who knew General Bakr Sidqi intimately that not only had he no such designs, but also his own personal interests were along different lines. Bakr was pre-occupied with achieving his ideal of strengthening and reorganizing the army, and, with all his keen interest in the political development of his country, he had no desire to take part in practical politics. Several members of Hikmat's Cabinet have assured the writer that Bakr neither tried to interfere in the Cabinet's deliberations nor, as was unjustifiably rumoured, attended meetings of the Council of Ministers.¹

To argue, therefore, that Bakr deliberately sought to establish a dictatorship may not be quite correct; but the trend in the political development of the country was unmistakably towards a dictatorship. In analysing the course of events in retrospect, it is no difficult task for the keen eye to discern a gradual shift in the incidence of political power from civilian to military hands; and it has become almost an axiom that the future fate of the country rested in the hands of the army. Had Bakr lived longer, it may be plausibly argued, he would have been bound to be the dictator, since he was not only the foremost army officer but unquestionably the most powerful as well.

The people's fear of an impending military dictatorship was, therefore, no idle talk; but it is an over-simplification to reduce this threat merely to the ambition of an army officer who deliberately planned to set up a dictatorship. General Bakr's alleged ambition, however, caused the public to begin to talk of 'the impossibility of dictatorship in Iraq', and to argue from Arab history that dictators always ruled for very short time, because they were inevitably killed in the end. Not only were such indirect warnings made to Bakr, but the idea of 'getting rid of Bakr' was often whispered secretly, and this did not fail to reach his ears, while certain plans were made to assassinate him.

Nor was this all. Bakr, feeling uneasy about his opponents, began to consider a 'black list', which included names of both his military

¹ For the clarification of this point the writer has depended on the authority of some neutral members of Hikmat's Cabinet such as Dr Naji al-Asil and Ja'far Hamandi as well as on Bakr's opponents in that Cabinet, such as Chadirchi and Salih Jabr.

and civilian enemies whom he wanted to get rid of by assassination. Bakr's secret plans were not always kept strictly secret, however, while the exaggerated rumours which circulated created an atmosphere of confusion and personal insecurity. This undoubtedly further incited his enemies seriously to consider ways and means of getting rid of him. A number of plots were made, but all were difficult to carry out since it had become increasingly difficult to see Bakr alone and unprotected or even to know exactly where he was after he had left his office. The General was fully aware of the growing number of his opponents among the army officers but he was very well safeguarded by a powerful and loyal bodyguard. It was therefore almost impossible for Bakr's enemies to carry out any plan successfully while the General remained in the capital.

The opportune moment, however, finally came when the Iraqi Government decided to send Bakr as head of a military mission to attend army manoeuvres in Thrace on 18 August 1937, in response to an official invitation from the Turkish Government. Bakr left Baghdad on 10 August and arrived at Mosul on the following day via Kirkuk. His most intimate friend and associate, Major Muhammad Ali Jawad, commander of the Royal Iraqi Air Force, went in person by air on 11 August in order to see the General off. After his arrival in Mosul on 11 August, Bakr and a few of his friends decided to spend the afternoon of that day at the Mosul aerodrome, because the Mosul Rest House was crowded and the General was tired and in need of relaxation. While he and his friends were chatting leisurely, a soldier, called Muhammad Ali Talla'fari, suddenly appeared unnoticed in front of Bakr. He broke up the happy gathering by firing two shots at Bakr which killed him instantly. Major Jawad, who hurriedly jumped up to rescue his friend and master, was also immediately killed. Thus the spectacular life of General Bakr Sidqi, which had become almost legendary, suddenly came to an end scarcely ten months after his celebrated march on Baghdad. The bodies of the General and his lieutenant were brought to Baghdad in a military plane on 12 August and buried with full military honours.

The plan of assassination was an elaborate and carefully considered one. Seven prominent army officers took part in its preparation, the most important among them being Aziz Yamulki, Muhammad Khorshid, Mahmud Hindi, and Fahmi Sa'id. When the news of Bakr's sudden appearance at the Mosul aerodrome reached one of the seven plotters, Muhammad Khorshid, the opportunity was at once

seized.¹ For a time the origin of the plot remained a mystery to most people, but Bakr's entourage were well aware that it was the work of their opponents.

A COUP D'ÉTAT TO END THE REGIME OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT

The assassination of Bakr marked the culmination of a struggle between two contending parties within the army, Bakr's followers and his nationalist opponents. Hikmat, who had become entirely dependent on Bakr's party, was confronted with a very awkward situation: he had either to adopt a high-handed policy against Bakr's enemies in order to satisfy his supporters, or resign. He tried to follow the first course of action, but the firm stand of Bakr's opponents forced him to resign.

When the news of Bakr's assassination reached Hikmat, he at once discussed the matter with the acting Minister of Defence,² and it was decided that a military court was to be set up and a full investigation made. Preliminary investigations were made by both Hamdi Zaynal, of the Mosul Force, and Antoine Luqa, who was sent from Baghdad. Their investigations were extensive and almost uncovered the secret of the plot. They therefore ordered the arrest of the ringleaders. Under the influence of Bakr's party in Baghdad, the Prime Minister ordered that all those accused should be sent to Baghdad for trial.

The authors of the plot were not unaware of their grave danger, but were prepared to meet any contingency that might arise. They kept silent during the initial investigations, but when the Prime Minister demanded that they be sent to Baghdad for trial, they decided to raise a military rebellion in Mosul and demand the resignation of the Hikmat Cabinet. Amin al-Umari, officer commanding the Mosul Forces, was compelled, under the threat or persuasion of the seven ringleaders, to issue a manifesto in which he declared that

¹ I have it on Aziz Yamulki's own authority that four plans were made to carry out the plot of assassination: one was to kill him at the Mosul Rest House; the second, at his brother's house, in case Bakr decided to spend the day with his brother Barqi; the third, by an attack on Bakr's car on his way to Tel-Kutchuk; and the fourth, which was considered the master-plan, at the Military club where it was planned to entertain Bakr in the evening of the day of his arrival. Aziz Yamulki, then president of the club, was to give a secret signal and the assassination was to take place when the lights were to be put out.

² Owing to the absence on leave of Abd al-Latif Nuri, Minister of Defence, the portfolio of Defence was given to Ali Mahmud, Minister of Justice, in an acting capacity.

he would no longer obey the orders of the Cabinet. The text of the manifesto follows:

Following the assassination of the late Bakr Sidqi and Muhammad Ali Jawad, investigations were conducted in a satisfactory way. The murderer and his instigators were arrested, and the investigations were conducted in such a manner as to confine their scope only to those who committed [the murder] and the instigators. The Cabinet in Baghdad, however, and those who have disguised aims decided to arrest a number of officers who had no connexion at all with the affair. In spite of our advice to the Cabinet that the incident should not be made a pretext for the punishment of innocent [officers], the Cabinet insisted on its demand to have these officers arrested and to have other innocent officers to be sent to Baghdad. The army has accordingly raised a revolt in order to protect its innocent officers. We have decided to take this responsibility and have severed our relations with Baghdad in order to stop the innocent officers from being sent. The people are required to keep order and to abstain from doing anything that might disturb the peace.

Mosul, 14 August 1937.

Amin al-Umari

Commander of the (Northern) Division.

The move of the Mosul command against the Cabinet was not made without previous consultation with commanders who were opposed to Bakr's party in certain other *liwas* of Iraq. Umari had contacted the commanders of the Diwaniyah, Kirkuk, and Sulaimaniyah forces, and secured their approval and support for his move against the Government. Thus, under the pretext of avoiding civil war, the main body of the Iraqi army refused to support the Cabinet's attitude towards the officers of the Mosul command.

In the capital rumours had spread that civil war was inevitable owing to the determination of Bakr's followers to punish all those concerned with the assassination. Bakr's followers, it seems, thought that the opportune moment had come to purge the army of their opponents who had long been intriguing against them. Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman might not have been willing to resort to force with its inevitable consequence of a civil war, but the influence of Bakr's party was then paramount in the capital and might have taken control of the Government in order to enforce its policy. The most important army officers of that party were Isma'il Haqqi, who took over the leadership of the group, and Shakir al-Wadi, who occupied the position of Muhammad Ali Jawad. These two prominent officers dominated affairs in Baghdad and exercised great influence on the Prime Minister. Though there were a few army officers opposed to

them, it looked as if the entire army in the capital had become subservient to them. With such a stubborn stand on the part of both the Baghdad and Mosul forces, civil war seemed indeed inevitable.

However, one portion of the Baghdad forces suddenly emerged in favour of the Mosul command and consequently turned the balance against Bakr's followers. The officer commanding the Washhash Camp (on the outskirts of the capital), Sa'id Tikriti, unexpectedly declared that he was not in favour of a civil war and daringly defied the central command of the capital. On 14 August 1937 he called his fellow officers at Washhash to a meeting and discussed the situation with them. Since it was unanimously agreed that the Iraqi army should never be divided and that civil war was to be avoided at all costs, Tikriti was charged with the leadership of the rebellious army in the capital and he at once declared that he no longer obeyed orders from the capital. He announced that he supported the attitude of the Mosul command.

Upon hearing the unpleasant news of the Washhash rebellion, the Prime Minister and his acting Minister of Defence went in person to the Washhash Camp in order to persuade Tikriti to change his mind. Hikmat assured Tikriti that there was no question of civil war and promised him to restrain Bakr's followers. Tikriti was apparently much too much opposed to the Bakr party and would not let the opportunity pass without making his obedience to the Government conditional on the temporary removal from their posts of certain army officers of Bakr's party until the situation had reverted to normal. The Diwaniyah command had already assured Tikriti of its support and demanded the removal of Bakr's followers from power. To all intents and purposes the main body of the Iraqi army had suddenly expressed its aversion to Bakr's party and was determined to avoid civil war.

In these circumstances the Prime Minister at last found himself helpless, since Bakr's party had become almost isolated and powerless. The King, it seems, had discovered the futility of the Cabinet's insistence on demanding that Bakr's assassins be sent to Baghdad, and decided to accept the proposals of Umari and Tikriti. Hikmat accordingly decided to resign. He tendered his resignation on 17 August 1937, and it was accepted at once.

On the same day the King invited Jamil al-Midfa'i to form a new Cabinet. Midfa'i, who had only two days before been called from Syria to join the Hikmat Cabinet as Minister of Defence in order to

relieve the situation, was a moderate politician who was on friendly terms with almost all public men. On the same day that Hikmat resigned, Umari issued from his Mosul headquarters the following declaration: 'In view of the disappearance of the causes which prompted the army to interfere in politics, matters have become normal. I therefore announce to the people that the situation has become entirely normal; relations with the capital have been re-established; and warning orders to the army are withdrawn.' Tikriti, in like manner, ordered his forces to return to normal and offered his obedience to the new Cabinet. Thus the crisis passed, and the Government formed through a military coup d'état needed another coup d'état for its dissolution.

The significance of the first military coup d'état can be rapidly summed up. First, it offered the Reformists, Iraq's embryonic liberal grouping, an opportunity to try out their reform programme which, however, failed. The experiment demonstrated that the country was not yet ready for the Reformists and that there was still much time needed before their ideas would be accepted. It is to be noted, however, that in 1936 liberalism lost ground not only in Iraq but also throughout the Middle East, as well as in many Western countries, where the anti-democratic movement was in full swing. Military and Fascist ideas had caught the imagination of many people and liberalism was much discredited.

Secondly, it brought the Iraqi army into direct touch with internal politics and might subsequently have led to the establishment of a military dictatorship. Lack of leadership after the assassination of General Bakr Sidqi left the army divided, while jealousy among the army officers induced each faction to support a different set of civilian politicians.

Thirdly, the army, though it had failed to establish a bona fide military rule, continued to influence the course of internal politics from behind the scenes. The army indeed became the sole deciding factor in the rise and fall of almost all Cabinets between 1937 and 1941. This naturally created instability in administration and led to the recurrence of military coups d'état. The first coup, while it was welcomed as a means of getting rid of an undesirable Cabinet, set a bad precedent for the intervention of the army in politics; the move indeed became impossible to stop and led to six more military coups. The last, which culminated in a conflict with Great Britain, met utter failure in war with a foreign Power.

VII

FURTHER COUPS D'ÉTAT. I

1937-41

THE army's counter coup d'état which brought the Hikmat-Bakr regime to an end was mistakenly regarded as repentance for the original sin of elevating to power a group of army officers who had disgraced its reputation. With the ending of the coup d'état regime, it was suggested, and tacitly approved by the nation, that Iraq was in need of a moderate Cabinet that would restore order and ensure justice rather than a vindictive Government which would embark on taking up past injustices and punishing the responsible criminals. The choice thus naturally fell on Jamil al-Midfa'i. Though he was attacked by his opponents for inefficiency and lack of political prudence, he was certainly praised for his straightforwardness and transparent honesty, and acted to the best of his abilities to maintain order and justice. He wisely regarded both the Yasin-Rashid usurpation of power and the Hikmat-Bakr coup as the result of the action and reaction of two contentious issues which should be forgotten. He admitted, it is true, that the two regimes had made their own mistakes with evil consequences, but he earnestly contended that by following a policy of 'forgetting the past',¹ he would contribute to the stability and progress of Iraq. Thus the Midfa'i compromise arose from practical consideration of the circumstances as well as from the personal conviction and character of the new Prime Minister.²

The policy of forgetting the past was manifested by deciding on certain measures which the new Government tried to the best of its ability to carry out. The émigrés were allowed to return from exile;

¹ *Siyasat Isdal as-Sitar* (policy of dropping the curtain).

² In a note written to the present writer in Midfa'i's own hand dated 28 May 1947, Midfa'i stated that owing to a schism in the group which might have led to a conflict between Bakr's followers and their opponents, he sought, by following a policy of *Isdal as-Sitar* (forgetting the past), to restore order and tranquility. Midfa'i contended, likewise, that it was unjust to give way to the followers of Bakr and punish Bakr's assassins, while those who assassinated General Ja'far al-Askari and others (at the instigation of Bakr) were pardoned. Midfa'i's own solution of the crisis, therefore, was to prevent both camps from taking any hostile action against one another. He also stated that he was given assurance by the leading army officers that they would no longer interfere in politics.

and a law was enacted which declared public amnesty for all those who took part in the second coup d'état. The Hikmat-Bakr followers were left unmolested, but were ignored. Members of the former Chamber and certain prominent émigrés composed the new Parliament, which met on 23 December 1937. Only those members of the former Chamber who were outspoken supporters of Bakr Sidqi, as well as the Reformists, were excluded. General Ja'far al-Askari's body, which had been disgracefully buried outside Baghdad during Bakr's march on Baghdad, was removed and re-interred at the royal mausoleum with full military honours on 4 October 1937. The Cabinet was then urged to bring the ignoble murderers of the General to trial, but it was soon realized that under the Public Amnesty Law, passed by the Hikmat Sulayman Government, it was impossible to make a case against them.

While the policy of forgetting the past was on the whole faithfully carried out, it was no easy task to restrain recriminations when certain émigré members of Parliament severely criticized the former regime. The Prime Minister often appealed to them in the interest of their country to avoid discussion of past tragedies and to observe his policy of forgetting the past. In the Chamber of Deputies, however, Rustum Haydar, former Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, was the first émigré member who, in an angry and impassioned outburst on 4 April 1938, pleaded for the indulgence of the House for a moment to ignore the wise maxim of forgetting the past. His scathing attack on the Hikmat-Bakr regime led to accusations and counter-accusations between him and Muhammad Ali Mahmud, Minister of Justice under the former regime, and also between General Taha al-Hashimi, former Chief of the General Staff, and other members. Finding that his policy of forgetting the past was completely ignored, the Prime Minister intervened affably but firmly, and with a display of public spirit.¹ During the debate in the Senate, however, he himself lost his temper and indulged, in like manner, in vain personal recriminations. In the course of a debate on the new Public Amnesty Law, both Senators Mahmud Subhi ad-Daftari and Rashid Ali al-Gaylani argued that to pardon persons who took part in a military coup d'état was not a far-sighted policy, because it would inevitably lead to further coups d'état. Rashid Ali went so far as to declare bluntly and impetuously that he did not believe in the soundness of the policy of

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 8th Session, 1937-8, pp. 290-4, 345-8, 350-1.

forgetting the past. He had already proposed, he asserted, to bring to trial all those who were directly responsible for political crimes against the State. This allusion to political crimes exhausted the patience of the Prime Minister who rose to reply and hinted to Rashid Ali that he had himself intrigued against former Cabinets. A verbal duel ensued between Midfa'i and Rashid Ali with accusations and counter-accusations, until it was cut short by one of the senators who wisely proposed to end further discourse on the subject.¹

The Midfa'i Cabinet, it is true, was able to restore order and security, but in fact it did nothing constructive to promote the development of the parliamentary system of Iraq, nor did it set an example of tolerating opposition through constitutional procedure. Its political opponents, mainly made up of members of the pre-Bakr regime, began to criticize the Government in Parliament and the press, and impatiently hoped for a Cabinet change in order that they might return to power. Since Parliament was dominated by the Executive, and the agitation in the press aroused the hostility of the Cabinet, it was soon realized that any Cabinet change would not be the result of constitutional procedure.

Opposition to the Government came from two main groups. The first, made up of followers of Generals Nuri and Taha, began to contact army officers in order to overthrow the Cabinet by force; the second, mainly former members of the group, supported Rashid Ali and secretly distributed leaflets denouncing Midfa'i; and began to throw explosive materials in certain public places of the capital in order to stir up hostility against the Government. The Midfa'i Cabinet dealt promptly and firmly with the latter, but was quite unaware of the activities of the former. When news reached the Government that Rashid Ali and his group were restless, the Council of Ministers decided (12 December 1938) to apply the so-called Seditious Propaganda Law, passed by Parliament only a few months earlier, which empowered the Government to arrest mischief-makers and put them under police surveillance in distant localities. Rashid Ali and a few of his followers were immediately arrested and sent to various distant places outside the capital where they were put under strict police supervision.

This action of the Midfa'i Cabinet neither put an end to secret opposition nor inspired order and stability. Parliament was then not in session, but when it later met, after the fall of the Cabinet, severe

¹ *Proceedings of the Senate*, 8th Session, 1937-8, pp. 76-9, 80-2.

criticism was made of Midfa'i's action in arresting certain members of Parliament (Rashid Ali and others) who were considered to enjoy parliamentary immunity.¹ The Nuri-Taha group, on the other hand, were now ready to exploit the discontent of a handful of dissolute army officers with whom they had been in league for such an eventuality.

THE THIRD COUP D'ÉTAT

The acid test of Midfa'i's policy of forgetting the past, however, should be sought not in the re-establishment of parliamentary rule, since there was no true parliamentary life before the first coup d'état, but in its ability to keep the army away from politics. Midfa'i, it will be recalled, accepted office only on the understanding that the army officers would no longer interfere in politics. It was tacitly implicit (in this policy) that Midfa'i would neither punish the Hikmat-Bakr group nor would allow the anti-Bakr party to influence his administration. He endeavoured to keep the balance among the army officers by appointing General Husayn Fawzi, a neutral army officer, to the position of Chief of the General Staff, and Nazif ash-Shawi, an old friend of Midfa'i's, as Assistant Chief of Staff. Several other transfers in high army posts were made in order to please the anti-Bakr group. Amin al-Umari, who led the revolt against Hikmat in Mosul, was appointed officer commanding the first Infantry Division; Salah ad-Din as-Sabbagh as Director of Military Operations; Mahmud Salman as officer commanding Mechanized Forces; Kamil Shabib as Commandant of the Infantry, and Aziz Yamulki as Officer Commanding Mechanical Transport. Midfa'i believed that these appointments would placate the army officers, while his assumption of the portfolio of Defence, in addition to the Premiership, would enable him to keep the army immune from the intrigues of his rival political opponents.

Midfa'i's handling of the army problem was so palpably superficial as to cast serious doubt on his understanding of the issues involved. He owed his own elevation to power to the army, and therefore his policy was bound to fall to pieces if it ran counter to the desires of the army officers. Midfa'i, in fact, had to choose either invariably to please the dominant party in the army, or to break it. His 'compromise' was doomed to failure because he did neither. He

¹ The Seditious Propaganda Law was submitted by General Nuri's Cabinet to the High Court and was declared unconstitutional and repealed on 11 September 1939.

expected, perhaps, that the army officers would fulfil their pious pledge of withdrawing from politics. If they revived their interest in politics, Midfa'i contended, it would be because they were liable to be influenced by his political opponents. His handling of the crisis, therefore, when it recurred, was merely to arrest those civilian politicians whom he suspected of having induced the army officers to rise against the Government.

The dominant party in the army was divided into two groups. There were, in the first place, those army officers who were directly responsible for the plot against Bakr and were determined to control the army. The leaders of this group were Salah ad-Din as-Sabbagh, Mahmud Salman, Fahmi Sa'id, Kamil Shabib, and Aziz Yamulki. These officers prevailed on Husayn Fawzi and Amin al-Umari, who were rather unpolitically minded and inclined to be neutral, to join their group and form a ring of 'Seven'. In the second place, there was a smaller group which had also been anti-Bakr, but was not friendly to the Seven. Some of them, such as Sa'id Tikriti and Nazif ash-Shawi, were old friends of Prime Minister Midfa'i, whose ear was ever ready to listen to their whispers. This aroused the suspicions of the Seven and aggravated the schism in the army.

The inner discontent of the Seven was fomented when Prime Minister Midfa'i relinquished the portfolio of Defence to a new minister, Colonel Sabih Najib, who joined the Cabinet on 30 October 1938. Colonel Najib, after long service in the army, was appointed to the position of Director-General of Police. Owing to his allegedly arrogant attitude to senior army officers, and to his display of unfriendliness towards the Seven, the appointment of Najib to the portfolio of Defence precipitated the crisis. Sabih Najib, it seems, believed he could break the power of the Seven, but he was in fact entirely unequal to the task. His attitude betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge when the care of a reformer was required. Najib's arrogant and threatening attitude towards the Seven, who flattered themselves on having elevated his master to power, decisively alienated their sympathies and forced them to throw themselves in with the lot of Midfa'i's political opponents. These, it will be recalled, having failed to overthrow the Cabinet by peaceful opposition in Parliament, found in the dissatisfaction of the Seven a better instrument to use against a discredited Cabinet. Contact between the Seven and the opposition was maintained with complete secrecy. Of the Seven, Fahmi Sa'id, Mahmud Salman, and Aziz Yamulki conducted

secret negotiations with Generals Nuri as-Sa' id and Taha al-Hashimi, and came to a tacit understanding to use force to compel Midfa'i to resign. Such a political bargain would relieve the Seven of the hostility of Sabih Najib, while the enhancement of their prestige and power by carrying out another coup d'état attracted them.

Matters came to a head when secret news reached the Seven of an impending move by the Cabinet to place a few army officers on the retired list. Colonel Salah ad-Din as-Sabbagh immediately called his fellow colleagues to a meeting in his office at noon on 24 December 1938, but only five of the Seven attended (Husayn Fawzi and Umari were not present).¹ It did not take long to come to a decision to overthrow the Midfa'i Cabinet by force, and it was decided to concentrate the forces at the Rashid Camp and orders were issued putting them on the alert. In the afternoon all preparations were completed and General Husayn Fawzi, who had been hastily called to Rashid Camp, was told of the grave decision taken by his fellow colleagues. Husayn Fawzi tried in vain to have an audience with the King to acquaint him with the army's complaints against the Midfa'i administration, but the Chief of the Royal Household, unaware of the impending crisis, refused to permit the army to establish contact with the King. Thus was the crisis precipitated.

When preparations for the coup d'état were completed according to plan, it was thought prudent to warn Midfa'i in the evening of the impending plot in the hope that action might be avoided by his resigning. The choice of herald fell on Aziz Yamulki who, feeling assured of the ultimate success of the Seven's move, sallied forth to the Prime Minister's home to deliver his message. Finding that the Prime Minister was paying a visit to Senator Abd-Allah Safi, Yamulki made his way to Safi's house. Here he did not break the news to the entire audience, but taking the Prime Minister aside, whispered to him that unless he resigned the army would carry out a coup d'état. To his surprise, Midfa'i at once yielded and told Yamulki that he would not allow bloodshed.

Midfa'i immediately hurried back to his house and called a meeting of his Cabinet. He broke the unhappy news to his colleagues and, after discussion, it was decided to request the King to relieve Midfa'i of the responsibility of authority. The King called upon the Chief of the General Staff, General Husayn Fawzi, who intimated to him that the army no longer had confidence in Midfa'i, and that they desired

¹ Umari was then abroad on leave.

to have the new Cabinet entrusted either to General Nuri as-Sa'id, or to General Taha al-Hashimi.

The following morning (25 December 1938), Midfa'i and his colleagues called on the King at the Royal *Diwan* where they formally tendered their resignations in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff and other prominent army officers who had accompanied them. General Nuri, who had been also called upon by the King, was invited to form a new Government. The army again won, by carrying out a third coup d'état, thus overthrowing three Cabinets within two years. The Seven had become the controlling and ultimate authority behind the scene.

GENERAL NURI'S CABINET

General Nuri as-Sa'id, who had bitterly complained of the army's interference in politics, was himself elevated to authority by the army. His return to power, however, marked the restoration of the pre-Bakr regime, since several prominent members of that regime joined the new Cabinet. General Taha al-Hashimi, Yasin's brother and his Chief of the General Staff, was given the portfolio of Defence; Rustum Haydar, Chief of the Royal *Diwan* under Yasin, was given the portfolio of Finance; and Rashid Ali, Yasin's most formidable colleague and his Minister of Interior, was appointed Chief of the Royal *Diwan*. Several other prominent members of the pre-Bakr regime were either given Cabinet positions or appointed to higher Government posts.

At the outset General Nuri appeared in the guise of a wise statesman who, having looked at the recent past of Iraq with contrition, earnestly determined to embark on a policy which would help to alleviate the hardships and heal the political ills which Iraq had inherited from the immediate past. In his celebrated speech at the Muthanna Club on 4 January 1939, which was broadcast to the nation, he announced his new policy of reform with obvious sincerity and great candour. He admitted that, for various reasons, a number of mistakes had been committed in the past, but, he magnanimously contended, responsibility could not rest with any single group, but was due to 'our own immaturity in public life'. He then went on to point out that there were two systems of government in the West, namely, the dictatorial and the democratic systems; and expressed his firm belief in the latter. This belief had always been emphasized by the Iraqi nationalists who framed the constitution, and it was subscribed to by King Faysal I when he was proclaimed King of

Iraq. General Nuri invited the whole nation to co-operate with him in order that 'our constitutional democratic Government' might work effectively. He offered certain practical proposals to achieve that end, such as reviving constructive political parties based on principles consistent with Iraq's national aspirations; recognizing the principle of 'opposition', even if it led to criticism, with a view to its ultimate co-operation with the Government; raising the standard of the press and abolishing restrictions on its freedom in order to enable it to discuss public affairs with enlightenment instead of frittering away its energies in the flattery or abuse of rival politicians; and finally, amending both the constitution and the Electoral Law in such a manner as to make Parliament a truly representative body of the people.

When General Nuri started to carry out his proposed scheme of reform, he was astounded, and probably discouraged, to find it increasingly difficult to create solidarity among those who professed to be his faithful followers. The burning Palestine question, which kept him busy during the Midfa'i Cabinet, again distracted his attention from home affairs and he was compelled to leave for England in order to attend the round-table conference of January 1939. Naji Shawkat, Minister of Interior, was appointed Acting Prime Minister on 12 January 1939, and was entrusted with the difficult task of steering the Cabinet during General Nuri's absence. Efforts to organize political parties failed to materialize, in spite of the admitted necessity of reviving them.¹

When Parliament resumed its session under the new Cabinet on 9 February 1939, debate again reverted to vain personal recriminations.² Only two sittings of the Chamber of Deputies had taken place when Da'ud as-Sa'di (20 February) initiated discussion with a view to impeaching the members of the Midfa'i Cabinet on the grounds that they had misapplied the Seditious Propaganda Law by arresting Rashid Ali and his followers (including Sa'di himself) and putting them under police supervision.³ Sa'di's speech to the Chamber of Deputies, which was more in the nature of a popular harangue than a juridical statement, aroused the fury of the members of the Cabinet and its supporters, who were incited to reply in the most violent way

¹ The insistent clamours of the press to revive political parties did not avail. See *al-Istiqlal*, 19 January 1939.

² *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 8th Session, 1938, pp. 109–26.

³ For text of Sa'di's report see *ibid.* pp. 100–9.

and to reveal the intrigues and unconstitutional procedure which had swept the new Cabinet into power. Ibrahim Kamal, Minister of Finance under Midfa'i, spoke indignantly and denounced the methods used by Da'ud as-Sa'di and his fellow members in throwing explosive materials in certain public places of the capital, in order to achieve power. 'And now that they have attained their objective', continued Kamal, 'we no longer hear about explosive bombs.' Other members and supporters of the former Cabinet also spoke indignantly and when the debate on Sa'di's proposal was ended, the opposition members resembled a range of exhausted volcanoes. The vote was finally taken and the proposal was defeated by the entire House; the only vote in its favour was Sa'di's own. While the Government were not in favour of Sa'di's proposal,¹ they realized the strength of the opposition and decided to dissolve Parliament. In the following sitting of the Chamber of Deputies (22 February 1939), a royal decree was read which ordered the dissolution of the Chamber and the holding of general elections on the grounds that 'constitutional procedure requires complete harmony between the Executive and the Legislature', and since in the existing circumstances 'the Cabinet feels that no such harmony exists between itself and the Chamber, it has decided . . . to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and to hold new elections'.

When General Nuri came back from England (February 1939), his handling of the internal affairs of Iraq was governed, it seems, by two intentions: to isolate the army from politics and to liquidate possible opposition. Since he himself had been helped into power by the army officers, and since his remaining in power was dependent on them, he saw grave obstacles to controlling the army and probably thought it more prudent to handle the army's affairs differently. The cautious Prime Minister, therefore, occupied himself with other issues and turned to crush some of his political opponents and to awe others, while preparations for the general elections were made.

Early in March 1939, it was announced that an impending plot against the State was being prepared, and that its authors were none other than Hikmat Sulayman and his associates of the abortive Hikmat-Bakr regime. 'It became apparent', stated the official announcement, 'that Iraq's success was not regarded with satisfaction

¹ Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, one of Sa'di's friends and a supporter of the Government, resigned at once from the Chamber in protest against Sa'di's move, because Sa'di had aroused the opposition in Parliament.

by those mischief-makers who initiated harmful activities against the welfare and the true interests of the country. They have been the cause of all the pernicious and unfortunate events which have befallen the country in recent years, threatening the good name of Iraq and the freedom of the people.¹ A court martial was accordingly set up and a decree was issued on 5 March 1939, proclaiming martial law in the Rashid Camp and its neighbouring districts. On 18 March 1939, the court martial passed its verdicts in the following statement:

It has been proved to the Military Court Martial at Iar-Rashid Camp, as a result of investigations carried out some time ago, that the under-named persons have conducted a conspiracy against the safety of the State, and therefore the following sentences have been passed on them:

Hikmat Sulayman, Isma'il Tohala, Yunis Tohala, Hilmī Abd al-Karim, and Jawad Husayn: death sentences; Abd al-Hadi Kamil: seven years' hard labour; and Ali Ghalib: eight years' hard labour and two years under police surveillance.

In view of certain reasons that call for clemency, however, the death sentence passed on Isma'il Tohala was commuted to penal servitude for life, the death sentence passed on Jawad Husayn to fifteen years' hard labour, and the death sentence passed on Hikmat Sulayman to five years' imprisonment.

The King, influenced by a moving appeal of Hilmī Abd al-Karim's wife, ordered the last remaining death sentence to be commuted to penal servitude for life.

The alleged secret plot, which was uncovered by the investigations of the court martial, was supposed to be in the nature of a widespread conspiracy to overthrow the existing regime in Iraq by planning a huge banquet for over 250 prominent civil and military persons at the house of Amir Abd al-Ilah, cousin of King Ghazi (now the Regent), with a view to massacring 40 or 50 of them and to effecting a coup d'état which would bring the authors of the plot into power, with Amir Abd al-Ilah as a candidate for the throne. The court martial stated that Amir Abd al-Ilah, having obtained all the necessary information from those who got in touch with him, informed the Government of the impending plot. While the accused, with the exception of two, denied all such accusations and refuted the evidence with impressive arguments, it was nevertheless surprising that both Hilmī Abd al-Karim and Abd al-Hadi Kamil confessed to this conspiracy, which, it was alleged, was planned in co-operation with the

¹ See text in *Iraq Times*, 7 March 1939.

other accused persons. It remained an unsolved problem, however, why two of the accused admitted, or fabricated, such a fantastic conspiracy.¹ The nature of the court martial's verdict raised a number of speculations among the people, and the writer's investigations have confirmed the opinion held then, that the Government resorted to vindictive measures in the most unchivalrous manner in order to punish Hikmat Sulayman, the author of the coup d'état of 1936, and his associates. In his speech on 29 April 1939, Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'id denounced the authors of the plot as former members of the Union and Progress Party of the Ottoman Empire, who, having wrought havoc with the integrity of that Empire, had turned to destroy the new kingdom of Iraq.²

Both Nuri as-Sa'id and Hikmat Sulayman had begun their public life in Turkey. From the time when the Arab nationalist movement turned against the Turkish Unionists, when the latter came into power and launched their policy of Turkification, Hikmat (whose brother Mahmud Shevket Pasha led the military coup d'état against Sultan Abd al-Hamid) supported the policy of the Unionists, while Nuri was among those outspoken Arab nationalists who opposed the Unionists' policy. It happened that Hikmat had again assumed the role of a Unionist in Iraq when he invited the army to lead a rebellion against the Government, of which Nuri, it will be recalled, was a member. When Hikmat was overthrown and Nuri came back to power, it seems quite credible that a long-accumulated vindictive spirit at last induced General Nuri not only to punish his old foe and rival but also, if he could, to get rid of him and his associates once and for all.

KING GHAZI'S DEATH: PROCLAMATION OF THE REGENCY

While General Nuri was struggling with overwhelming difficulties in his attempt to reform the political machine of Iraq, another incident occurred which had far-reaching consequences in the internal politics of the country. This was the sudden and unexpected death of King Ghazi in a motor accident.

The story of this tragic accident may be briefly told, as stated in the official communiqué, as follows: while His Majesty King Ghazi,

¹ Mr C. S. Edmonds, formerly Adviser to the Ministry of Interior, made the following comment: 'The mystery of the confession is that Hilmi Abd al-Karim was a half-wit; he was bamboozled by the Chief of the Iraq Army Intelligence into believing there was a plot, and joining it.'

² For text of the speech see *al-Bilad*, 30 April 1939.

together with his personal servant and supervisor of radio, were driving in the same car from Zuhur Palace on their way to the Harithiyah Palace, on the evening of 3 April 1939, an accident suddenly occurred. The two men were sitting in the back seats of the car while the King was driving at an excessive speed.

When the car had passed over the railway level-crossing between the two Palaces [states the communiqué] the vehicle got out of control owing to its high speed; it shot off the road on to rough ground, crashing into an electric standard before His Majesty could stop it. The crash broke the standard, which fell on His Majesty's head, fracturing the skull and causing severe laceration of the brain. His Majesty was taken by police officers to Harithiyah Palace, where he died an hour later.

Investigations were at once made by the police. 'After examining carefully all aspects of the accident', stated the Report of the Baghdad West investigating magistrate, 'it has been proved that the crash was purely accidental.' The case was therefore closed, 'as there was no suspicion of a criminal act'.

Early in the morning of 5 April 1939, huge crowds gathered on both sides of the capital's main street, and along the Adhamiyah road to the royal mausoleum, to witness the funeral procession of their beloved sovereign; and at the Royal *Diwan* an assembly representing the various classes of the people gathered to pay their last tribute to the young King. The nation at large exhibited grief and mourning such as Iraq had not witnessed since the funeral of King Faysal I.

The death of King Ghazi was regarded as a national calamity, since he was regarded as a popular hero by the Arab nationalists and the rank and file of the people.² He had violently denounced French imperialism in Syria and Zionist claims in Palestine, and he demanded in no uncertain terms, in defiance of British prestige and interests, the annexation of Kuwayt, an adjacent British protectorate on the head of the Persian Gulf. His personal relations with certain influential army officers were intimate, and his outspoken political pronouncements gave great satisfaction both to the army and to the nationalists. His sudden death therefore took the country by surprise and gave rise to speculations as to possible foreign or internal political intrigues.

¹ See text of the 'Report of the Baghdad West Investigating Magistrate', in *Iraq Times*, 6 April 1939.

² During the Assyrian affair, it will be recalled, Amir Ghazi, then Crown Prince and acting head of the State in the absence of his father, supported the Rashid Ali Government's stand in its policy towards the Assyrians, which made him for the first time popular in the eyes of the people.

On 3 April 1939, in the evening of the day of the accident, the Council of Ministers met at Zuhur Palace and passed the following resolutions:

- (1) To proclaim His Royal Highness Amir Faysal as His Majesty King Faysal II, in accordance with Article 20 of the constitution;¹
- (2) to proclaim His Royal Highness Amir Abd al-Ilah Regent, in view of the fact that His Majesty the King had not come of age, in accordance with King Ghazi's wish as stated by Her Majesty the Queen and Princess Rajihah, King Ghazi's sister, before the Council of Ministers;
- (3) to convene Parliament in order to approve the proclamation of Regency in accordance with Article 22 of the constitution.

On 6 April Parliament was convened, after its dissolution the preceding December, and both the Prime Minister and the President of the Senate paid tribute to King Ghazi. The joint session of Parliament, after a ten-minute silence, was addressed by the President of the Senate, who read the resolutions passed by the Council of Ministers on 3 April. The proclamation of the Regency, the President of the Senate declared, required the approval of Parliament and therefore each member was called by name to give his decision. All those present unanimously approved the proclamation (only eight deputies were absent). Amir Abd al-Ilah was then called upon to take the Royal oath as Regent in the following terms: 'I swear by almighty God to respect the country's constitution and to be faithful to the nation and the country.' The meeting immediately afterwards came to an end.

King Ghazi's sudden death was a mystery to the great majority of the people, especially in the absence of a clear official announcement immediately afterwards. Started by anti-British elements, rumours that the incident was due to a secret British plot spread like wildfire throughout the country. This caused such a commotion among the students and the rank and file in Mosul that they were prompted to avenge the King's death by assaulting the British Consul at Mosul. Early in the morning of 4 April, the agitated crowd went to the British Consulate. The Consul, Mr G. E. A. C. Monck-Mason, who appeared on the balcony to placate the crowd by telling them the truth, was dealt a fatal blow with a pick-axe from behind.

¹ Article 20 states: 'The heir apparent shall be the eldest son of the King, in direct line, in accordance with the provision of the law of succession' (text of the Article before the Second Amendment of 1942).

Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'íd at once took up the matter, expressed regret to the British Embassy in Baghdad, and promised a full investigation as well as payment of compensation to the family of the murdered Consul. The affair was closed by the declaration of martial law in Mosul and the punishment of a few of the responsible leaders of the crowd, but the incident was an obvious symptom of political unrest in the country as well as of dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

While General Nuri's attention was mainly concentrated on Iraq's internal problems, the deterioration in the international situation naturally affected the policy of his Cabinet. Parliament, it will be recalled, was dissolved in February, and preparations were made for holding new elections. In March the programme of the Government was announced, promising the amendment of the constitution, the strengthening of the army, and a foreign policy consistent with Iraq's national aspirations.¹ The elections were completed early in June and the new Parliament met on 11 June 1939. Owing to overwhelming internal difficulties, and, perhaps, to the further deterioration in the international situation, the elections were as rigidly controlled as former elections; the Government nominees were therefore all returned as members of the new Chamber of Deputies. With the possible exception of a few opposing members who were excluded, the new members were drawn mainly from members of the four former sessions of Parliament.² This Chamber, which proved to be a subservient tool in the hands of various opposing Cabinets, was the only one (thus far) to complete its four-years' session.³

From the Munich agreement to the declaration of war, there was a divided opinion in Iraq regarding the fate of the Arabs should the Middle East be drawn into the war. Axis propaganda had attracted a considerable number of the people who looked forward to a better future for the Arabs if both Great Britain and France lost the war;

¹ See text of the programme in *al-Bilad*, 28 March 1939.

² See a statement to this effect made by the Prime Minister, *al-Istiqlal*, 12 June 1939.

³ Sayyid Abd al-Mahdi, speaking in the second sitting of the Chamber of Deputies on 17 June 1939, criticized the way in which the elections were carried out and remarked that such a control had left Parliament devoid of any dignity. See *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th (Extraordinary) Session, 1939, p. 12.

but the moderate nationalists were apprehensive of the fate of the Arabs if the Axis Powers penetrated to the Middle East.¹ General Nuri's policy, therefore, by adhering to the policy of alliance with Great Britain, while it aroused the criticism of the ultra-nationalists, was on the whole regarded as sound until the fall of France in June 1940. On 30 March 1939, General Nuri declared: 'Our foreign policy is based on the following two principles: (1) the policy of alliance with neighbouring independent Arab States and sincere friendship with our two neighbours, Turkey and Persia, in the spirit of the Sa'dabad Pact; (2) the policy of our alliance with Great Britain. . . .'

When, however, the European crisis culminated in Germany's attack on Poland on 1 September 1939, General Nuri made a speech in the evening of the same day, which was broadcast to the nation, in which he defined the attitude of Iraq should the German-Polish conflict develop into a general war. After expressing his deep regret that the international situation had deteriorated to such an extent, General Nuri said that Iraq, as a small nation, could do nothing. He therefore thought it his duty to explain to the public the position of his Government.

This country [said General Nuri] is bound to Great Britain by the Treaty of Alliance, which was signed on 30 June 1930. Article 4 of this treaty provides that 'should . . . either of the High Contracting Parties become engaged in war, the other High Contracting Party will . . . immediately come to his aid in the capacity of an ally. In the event of an imminent menace of war the High Contracting Parties will immediately concert together the necessary measures of defence. The aid of His Majesty the King of Iraq in the event of war or the imminent menace of war will consist in furnishing to His Britannic Majesty on Iraq territory all facilities and assistance in his power, including the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes, and means of communication.'

It will be seen from the foregoing article that Iraq, in her capacity as an ally of Great Britain, is bound only to afford all facilities in the form of transportation and communications to Great Britain inside Iraq and is not bound to take part in war on any front. But if Iraq is attacked—which is improbable—then she will be bound to defend her frontiers.

On 3 September 1939 Great Britain declared war on Germany. The Iraqi Government issued a decree announcing that 'The international situation has become critical', and therefore the Minister of Interior was empowered to censor all news or other information that was

¹ For further development of this divided loyalty in regard to foreign policy, see the next chapter.

received for publication, especially that which had bearing on the foreign policy of Iraq.

On 5 September 1939, Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with Germany.¹ The official communiqué stated: 'The Council of Ministers, at its meeting on 5 September 1939, decided to sever relations between the Iraqi Government and the German Government, and to deport all German subjects at present residing in Iraq.'

On the following day, the German Minister, Dr Fritz Grobba, was given his passports and left Iraq, with the members of his staff. Furthermore, all German subjects in Iraq were at first interned and then were handed over to the British authorities. When Parliament was convened on 2 November 1939 this action was criticized by Senator Jamil al-Midfa'i on grounds of impropriety; he maintained that the Iraqi Government should have kept the interned Germans under its own supervision.²

On 9 September 1939, it was announced in London that the Regent of Iraq, his Royal Highness Amir Abd al-Ilah, had sent the following telegram to his Majesty King George VI:

In the present grave international situation the duties of friendship and the honourable discharge of our obligations make it incumbent on me to express to Your Majesty the unshakable attachment of our Government and people alike to the letter and spirit of the Treaty of Alliance uniting Iraq and Britain, and to assure you of our firm determination to do everything in our power, in the same spirit, to co-operate with our great ally until right and justice and the lofty principles, to defend which you have entered the war, shall prevail.

King George replied: 'My Government much appreciate the encouragement your message brings them, and if ever the horrors of war were to descend upon Iraq my Government would carry out their obligations in the same spirit of loyalty and resolution.'

The Government of Iraq, while it declared its non-belligerency in the present conflict, began to take precautionary measures which were

¹ Mr C. S. Edmonds, commenting on this paragraph, added the following statement: 'My recollection is that the issue before the Regent and the politicians just before and after the actual outbreak of war was whether Iraq should declare war on Germany or just declare a state of war; but some of the politicians (Rashid Ali from his post of vantage as Chief of the Royal *Diwan* in particular) already thought of using the issue in order to extract concessions on Palestine and Syria, while the younger officers feared that war might mean being sent to the front (hence Nuri's broadcast of 1 September). While the Government was hesitating Egypt broke off relations with Germany and Iraq followed suit on 5 September.'

² *Proceedings of the Senate*, 9th Session, 1939, p. 9.

intended to protect Iraq from pernicious propaganda or, in case it was attacked, to prepare it for such an eventuality as actual participation in war. On 12 September 1939, two important decrees were issued; the first proclaimed a 'state of emergency' in Iraq which empowered the Minister of Interior, in addition to the powers vested in him under the Residence Law, to fix the place of residence of any foreigner in Iraq and the conditions under which he would be permitted to stay in the country as well as to supervise his movements. The Minister was also empowered to issue orders for the arrest of any foreigner if he had reasons to believe that it was dangerous to let him remain at liberty. Furthermore, the Minister was empowered to order general or partial black out in any area of the country. Finally, he was empowered to prohibit the use of wireless receiving sets in public places, and could impose a curfew in any place or district of Iraq.

The other decree, entitled 'Decree for Organizing the Country's Economic Life during the present International Crisis', gave the Government powers to issue regulations for the control, prevention, or restriction of the import or export of certain goods, including goods which were in possession of the Customs authorities. The Government was also empowered to take steps for the storage, supply, and sale of 'essential commodities'; to monopolize their sale to the public; and to fix prices and take steps to ensure the effective execution of measures decided upon. On 13 September a decree was issued which provided for the establishment of a Central Supply Board to be appointed by the Council of Ministers. The Board, with a Cabinet minister as its chairman, was authorized to set up similar supply boards in various districts, and was entrusted with the duty of seeing that the measures for regulating the economic life of the country were effectively carried out.

With regard to the defence of Iraq a decree was issued on 13 September 1939, which empowered the Minister of Defence, in the event of a threat of war or declaration of war, or on the proclamation of general mobilization, to requisition all factories, all means of land, sea, and air transport, bridges, roads, ports, railways, stores of petrol, oil, fuel, medical supplies, and wireless receiving sets. The Minister was also empowered to supervise all publications, letters, telegrams, and wireless and telephonic communications.

When Parliament was convened on 1 November 1939 the Regent, in his Speech from the Throne, reviewed the development in the

international situation and referred to the aggression of Germany and her violation of various international obligations, which compelled Great Britain, in defence of the independence of other States, to declare war. He also referred to the decision of the Iraqi Government to sever diplomatic relations with Germany, and its firm determination to fulfil Iraq's treaty obligations towards Great Britain.

The speech was criticized in both Houses of Parliament on the grounds that the Government, before making those decisions and taking those precautionary measures, should have called Parliament to meet earlier, in an extraordinary session, in order to discuss and consider the measures necessary for the defence of the country and the regulation of its economic life. With regard to Iraq's treaty obligations towards Great Britain, the prevailing opinion was, however, favourable to its fulfilment; but a few members, in both Houses, requested the Government to approach Great Britain to fulfil the national aspirations of the other Arab countries, especially those of the Arabs of Palestine.¹

ASSASSINATION OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The political opponents of General Nuri contended that the strength of his Cabinet was mainly due to Rustum Haydar, Minister of Finance, who had already distinguished himself in the service of King Faysal I. In 1931 Rustum had joined the first Cabinet of General Nuri, as Minister of Finance, and was a great source of strength to that Cabinet. When General Nuri returned to power in 1938, Rustum, as one of the *émigrés* who had suffered persecution under the Hikmat-Bakr regime, was naturally invited by General Nuri to join his Cabinet and was given the portfolio of Finance. Thus Rustum had reached Cabinet rank by sheer ability and hard work. It is for this very reason that General Nuri's political opponents concentrated their attack on the Cabinet by criticizing its financial policy, while Ibrahim Kamal and Sabih Najib, both of the Midfa'i group, indulged in a scathing and personal attack on Rustum Haydar. While the Prime Minister's suspicion of Rustum's opponents was naturally aroused when the atrocious murder of Rustum was committed, his handling of the affair aroused criticism and was one of the principal causes of his Cabinet's eventual fall.

Rustum, it is true, was praised for his intelligence and great integrity,

¹ See *Proceedings of the Senate*, 1939, pp. 7-8; *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 1939, pp. 43-4, 47, 48-50.

but his Syrian origin and the fact that he was a Shi'i told against him. He was mistrusted by the prejudiced Sunnis and the anti-Syrian elements for championing the cause of the Shi'i community. Finally, Rustum was much criticized by the ultra-nationalists for his pro-British policy, since they thought the salvation of the Arabs depended on the destruction of the democratic bloc.

Husayn Fawzi Tawfiq, the murderer, was an adventurer who had gone from one failure to another. He displayed, from his early life, an egocentric and narrow turn of mind, and an aversion to the Syrians in Iraq whom he regarded as lacking in genuine patriotism. He was employed by the Department of Police but was later dismissed in 1935. He was then employed in the Ministry of Defence but soon, again, was dismissed. Having thus lost his opportunity in Government service, Tawfiq began to work as an agent for local merchants and made a tour in Europe and visited Germany. When he came back to Iraq, he became violently anti-British and pro-Axis. But, it seems, his financial resources were hardly enough to provide him with a decent living and he applied once more for Government service. When his inquiries were not followed by any definite promises, he was, by way of excuse, told that the Minister of Finance was not in favour of his re-employment. Tawfiq finally decided to see the Minister of Finance with the intention of taking his life should that Minister refuse his appeal. On 18 January 1940 Tawfiq went to see Rustum Haydar in his own office and handed a threatening letter to him. Sensing that an attempt would be made on his life, Rustum at once decided to leave the office, but Tawfiq instantly fired at him. Rustum was immediately taken to the Royal Hospital, but died from his wounds four days later. Tawfiq wrote a personal letter to the Prime Minister from prison, asking for pardon, and stated that he had been actuated to commit the crime purely from 'nationalist motives'.

Owing to the murderer's background, and to the possible complicity of Rustum's political opponents, the Prime Minister decided to carry out an extensive investigation. The case was referred to a court martial, and martial law was declared at the Rashid Camp. The court opened the case on 3 March 1940, and six accused persons, including the murderer, were brought to trial. In the course of his trial, Tawfiq declared that 'he had attended a luncheon party some months ago at the estate of Sabih Najib' (former Minister of Defence under Midfa'i). 'After lunch', said Tawfiq, 'Sabih Naiib and Ibrahim

Kamal drew him apart from the other guests and induced him to save the country from Rustum Haydar.'

The court martial examined the statements of the defendants and came to the conclusion that the principal defendant had committed the crime on his own initiative. He was accordingly sentenced to death (and was subsequently hanged on 27 March 1940). As to the other defendants, who were accused of 'inducing the murderer to commit the crime', the court, having cross-examined all witnesses, came to the conclusion that there was no proof, and they were all acquitted except Sabih Najib. The court found that in spite of the fact that there was no evidence to suggest that Sabih Najib had incited Tawfiq to commit the murder, he had, nevertheless, uttered words 'liable to cause feeling of hatred and dissension among various sections of the community', at a party given by Hamdi al-Pachachi. The court therefore sentenced him to one year's imprisonment.¹

Tawfiq's attempt to implicate six other persons by his express declaration to the court gave rise to a great deal of unfavourable comment. The opposition contended that the Prime Minister had tried, in the same way as in the alleged conspiracy attributed to Hikmat Sulayman, to get rid of his opponents by involving them in the affair. It was remarked, likewise, that the several private conversations which the Prime Minister had with Tawfiq before the trial were designed, perhaps, to persuade him to implicate Ibrahim Kamal, Sabih Najib, and other political opponents in the matter. It was assumed that Tawfiq was probably promised pardon by the Prime Minister if he implicated the foregoing persons in the assassination. This assumption, it is held, was supported by the fact that Tawfiq was reported to have uttered, shortly before he was hanged, a few words to the effect that the Prime Minister had betrayed him; which seemed evidence of the Prime Minister's complicity implicating his political opponents.

While the assassination of Rustum Haydar might plausibly be construed as the culmination of factional jealousies, its immediate cause was by no means clear. The mind of the murderer may have been influenced by other reasons, but apparently the main reasons which prompted him to commit the crime were personal.

¹ Sabih Najib was released on 25 April 1940 after serving hardly a month in prison. Rashid Ali, who succeeded General Nuri as Premier, secured a royal pardon for Najib.

THE FOURTH COUP D'ÉTAT

General Nuri, contrary to his lofty declarations, was preoccupied with partisan issues which scarcely left him time enough to handle the affairs of the army. His Cabinet, after the assassination of Rustum, was growing weaker because it lacked solidarity. From the time that he initiated the trial of Hikmat Sulayman disagreement among General Nuri's colleagues grew and culminated with the murder of Rustum. The Prime Minister's alleged attempt to silence his political opponents naturally fostered this, and some, such as Salih Jabr, contended that a thorough investigation, in order to insure justice, had not been made.¹

Faced with such an overwhelming division, General Nuri tendered his resignation to the Regent on 18 February 1940 in a letter in which he stated the various difficulties which had compelled him to resign. In that letter General Nuri reviewed the political situation in Iraq since the first coup d'état, which, he said, had 'enabled a number of adventurers to assume power' through unlawful means, who had exposed the integrity of Iraq to the greatest dangers.

When Iraq was saved from the nightmare of this rule [continued General Nuri] some persons in influential positions recommended the adoption of a policy of 'forgetting the past' in the belief that it would help to restore the unity of the country and make for co-operation and progress. It was not long before the dangers arising from this policy became evident, and a plot for another coup d'état was discovered. This, like the first plot, was intended to place its instigators in positions of power.

General Nuri went on to declare that he had maintained a policy of 'forgetting the past', with the obvious consequences that it led to further political crimes culminating in the murder of the Minister of Finance. 'These acts of violence', said General Nuri, 'had a decisive effect on public opinion. The country is now united in its conviction that a continuation of such crimes would expose Iraq to the gravest dangers.' But, General Nuri added, circumstances had made it absolutely impossible 'to carry out the duties incumbent on me in a manner which will reassure the public'. General Nuri's resignation was accepted on 20 February 1940.

¹ In an interview with the writer, General Nuri stated that the main reason for the fall of his Cabinet was the lack of solidarity which followed Rustum Haydar's assassination. Rustum, said General Nuri, was a congenial and affable person who was always capable of mending differences among the members of the Cabinet. The assassination of Rustum had not only meant the loss of such an integrating factor, but had also aggravated the schism in the Cabinet.

The situation in the army, which had a close bearing on the course of political events, was hardly touched on in General Nuri's letter of resignation. The seven army officers, who were responsible for bringing back Generals Nuri and Taha to power, had become divided among themselves into two camps. The first group was made up of three, namely, General Husayn Fawzi, Chief of the General Staff; General Amin al-Umari, General Officer Commanding the First Division; and Colonel Aziz Yamulki, Officer Commanding Mechanical Transport. In the second group there were the four colonels, namely, Salah ad-Din as-Sabbagh, Mahmud Salman, Fahmi Sa'id, and Kamil Shabib. The Three were moderate and less active in political activities and, satisfied with their newly attained dignified ranks, they sought stability. The Four displayed an intensely nationalistic spirit and sought, under the influence of the Muthanna Club and the Syrian and Palestinian nationalists, to control political events from behind the scene. The Four Colonels, ever since their graduation from the Royal Staff College in 1933, had formed an intimate friendship and pledged each other help and co-operation to control the army. Their ulterior motive was none other than to control the political machine and to achieve the pan-Arab dream.

When General Nuri tendered his letter of resignation to the Regent, the Seven met at General Taha's house and discussed the political situation closely. The Four Colonels complained that General Nuri had resigned without their knowledge and asserted that their opinion should be of prime importance in the formation of the new Cabinet. The Three maintained that the matter should rest with the Regent and that it was no longer their business to interfere in politics. The meeting broke up without agreement.

The Four Colonels, it seems, suspected that the Three were betraying them, and they especially suspected Husayn Fawzi's subservient attitude to the Regent, and decided to oust them out of the army. Their method, as usual, was again to use the armed forces of the State in order to influence the Regent in the selection of the new Prime Minister. An understanding was apparently reached between General Nuri and the Four that the latter would raise a rebellion in the army in order to influence the Regent to re-invite General Nuri to form the new Cabinet. The Four, it seems, had extracted a promise from General Nuri that on returning to power he would place the Three on the retired list.

On 21 February 1940 the Four Colonels had successfully con-

centrated the forces in the Rashid Camp and placed them on the alert. On hearing of this move, Generals Husayn Fawzi and Umari placed their forces at Washhash Camp on the alert. It looked as if the forces under the Four and the Three army officers would start fighting, and as if civil war were probable. The Regent, though the forces at Washhash Camp were loyal to him, but probably because he saw their weakness in comparison with the forces in the other camp, ordered the two contending parties to put an end to their dispute and invited General Nuri to form a new Cabinet. General Nuri formed his Cabinet on the same day (21 February 1940) and at once issued orders placing the Three on the retired list. It is thus that the Three, who supported authority against rebellion, were penalized; while the Four, who cajoled and threatened, had won and became the unrivalled masters of the army.¹ The evil consequence of this move was probably not foreseen by General Nuri. But a year later he himself became the victim of another rebellion raised by the Four in support of another candidate for the Premiership.

GENERAL NURI'S RECONSTRUCTED CABINET

On the following day (22 February 1940) General Nuri chose his colleagues. With only minor changes the personnel was the same as that of his former Cabinet. General Nuri's return to power came as a surprise to the nation, but no full explanation of what had taken place behind the scenes was made. Questions were asked in Parliament, but no statement was made in spite of the fact that one deputy daringly raised the question in the Chamber of Deputies.² On 26 February 1940 Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'id made a speech, which was broadcast to the nation, in which he tried to give an apologetic explanation of the recent changes in Government. He referred to plots and political crimes which were the cause of his resignation on 18 February and stated that his desire was 'to take the necessary steps, before it was too late, to prevent further political crimes'. After his resignation, said General Nuri, the Regent had at once begun consultations for the formation of a new Cabinet. 'While we were awaiting the end of the crisis I was confronted', added General Nuri, 'with the urgent necessity [on the evening of 21 February 1940] of

¹ General Nuri, realizing the unjustified action taken against the Three, offered them diplomatic positions abroad. Husayn Fawzi and Umari refused, but Yamulki accepted the position of chargé d'affaires in Afghanistan.

² *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1939, p. 160. See also *Proceedings of the Senate*, 14th Session, 1939, pp. 129–31, 132, 134.

forming a new Cabinet as soon as possible in view of certain unexpected developments in the internal as well as the external situation.' He went on to expatiate on the dangers of political crimes, to explain his foreign policy, and to lay down his programme of reform. With regard to political crimes, he said:

The political crimes and plots to which I have referred have swept over the country during the last few years threatening its very foundations, disturbing its tranquillity, harming its reputation abroad, and hindering its progress. . . . Political crimes are somewhat akin to fire. Any person can cause an outbreak of fire, and similarly almost anybody can cause an outbreak of political crime when and where he wishes to do so. Just as an outbreak of fire cannot be left until it burns itself out, political crime must be combated with the utmost energy lest it should imperil the safety of the whole country.

With regard to foreign policy, the Prime Minister said:

. . . in our foreign policy we have always followed the lines laid down for us by our great King, his late Majesty King Faysal, aiming at the strengthening of Iraq and the consolidation of friendly relations with countries to which we are attached by bonds of kinship and mutual interest, at the same time defending our frontiers against any possible foreign attack and safeguarding the country from falling under the domination of any foreign Power.

Turning to his future programme of reform, General Nuri referred to the atrocious murder of Rustum Haydar and promised to give the matter his most careful consideration in order to reassure the public that justice would prevail. As to specific points of reform, he promised: (1) the necessity of taking all the precautionary measures required to ensure the defence of the country in the face of recent international developments; (2) the amendment of the constitution and the reform of Electoral Law; (3) the carrying out of proposals for the reforms in the Diwaniyah *liwa*, which were approved by the Council of Ministers a few weeks ago. Steps would also be taken to settle land disputes in that *liwa*. 'Finally', concluded General Nuri, 'I am glad to be able to announce that I shall do my best to open a new chapter in the history of Iraq in which there will be respect for the constitution and fuller co-operation between the leaders of the country.'

In the foregoing speech, General Nuri appeared in the eyes of the nation as the enemy of the 'political crimes' which had brought the country to the brink of destruction, and promised to contribute to

its progress by offering an alluring programme of reform which would 'open a new chapter in the history of Iraq'. By political crimes, however, he hardly meant the interference of the army in politics, but he sought rather to discredit his political opponents by implying that they were implicated in the murder of Rustum. As to his keen interest in amending both the constitution and the Electoral Law as a means of strengthening parliamentary control, his efforts bore no immediate fruit, but the work was carried on later.

Investigation of the murder of Rustum was continued after General Nuri's return to power, and the court martial, it will be recalled, acquitted six of the defendants and sentenced only Tawfiq to death. This verdict, however, which was meant to close the whole affair, led to further lack of agreement in General Nuri's reconstructed Cabinet. Salih Jabr, a great friend of Rustum, and one who owed his elevation to Cabinet rank to him, was dissatisfied with the way in which the investigation was carried out and threatened to resign. Persuasion to induce him to remain in the Cabinet did not avail and his resignation was finally accepted on 17 March 1940, only two weeks before the whole Cabinet was compelled to resign. In an interview with the writer, Salih Jabr asserted that he had firmly believed that the assassination of Rustum was due to pro-Axis instigators who feared Rustum's influence in promoting Anglo-Iraqi co-operation. General Nuri, while he believed in Rustum's sound policy, was subservient in his internal policy to influential groups (especially the Four Colonels) who avowedly advocated a pro-Axis policy. Salih Jabr was by no means friendly to the Four and proposed, after the third coup d'état, to make a full investigation into its authorship. General Taha al-Hashimi was satisfied by the fact that the Three were placed on the retired list.

Meanwhile, General Nuri's prestige in the army had shown signs of decline since it was suspected that his pro-democratic policy would lead him to support Great Britain, should the war spread to the Middle East. Whether Rashid Ali had directly got in touch with the Four, the writer has not yet been able to ascertain, but Rashid had certainly appeared as the politician who was keen to follow a foreign policy consistent with Iraq's interests and national aspirations. Thus both the lack of solidarity in General Nuri's Cabinet and his own weakened position in the army compelled him to tender his resignation on 31 March 1940. In his letter of resignation to the Regent, General Nuri stated the various difficulties which had confronted his Cabinet

and compelled him to resign. In accordance with constitutional procedure, however (rather than by resorting to another coup d'état), General Nuri concluded his letter, 'I am opening the way for my successor by submitting my resignation to your Royal Highness, thus hoping to secure real and sincere co-operation among the prominent leaders of the country....'

VIII

FURTHER COUPS D'ÉTAT. II

1937-41

FROM the time when General Nuri tendered his resignation on 21 February 1940 Rashid Ali, then Chief of the Royal *Diwan*, toyed with the idea of succeeding him as Prime Minister. The recurrence of the army's intervention in politics and the insistence of the Four Colonels on General Nuri's return to power prevented him for the moment from realizing his ambition. Ready to gamble for higher stakes as he was, Rashid Ali felt uneasy at the outset about continual army intervention in politics, since his cherished objective would be dependent upon the pleasure of the Four. He realized that General Nuri's return to power was accomplished only through the support of the Four and that he himself could return to power only by alienating the loyalty of the Four from General Nuri. Rashid Ali was of the opinion, as indeed were other politicians, that the army's intervention in politics was caused mainly by the dissension and rivalry among the politicians. His solution of the problem was, therefore, to restore to the Regent such powers as the constitution provided by securing a pledge from the politicians to abstain from inciting the army officers to interfere in politics.

Rashid Ali seemed to be the wise statesman who saw grave danger from army intervention in politics. As Chief of the Royal *Diwan* he was in constant touch with the Regent, and therefore was able to persuade him that the army's intervention had been initiated by politicians. Rashid Ali's endeavours were not in vain, for the Regent was at once ready to accept his ingenious proposal to call the leading politicians to a meeting in order to discuss ways and means of isolating the army from politics. It is significant to note that Rashid Ali, who had himself made secret overtures to army officers and was author of the future military coup d'état of 1941, initiated such a move. The reason for it is obvious. He sought to get a pledge from his rival politicians in order to deny them the use of the army as a tool against himself when he should be Premier.

The Regent, who was naturally anxious to reassert his authority, called a meeting at the Royal *Diwan* on 14 March 1940, attended by

all former Prime Ministers, over which he presided; and, after a long and protracted discussion, a pledge of support for any group in power was put on record, signed by all present, and given to the Regent. The text of the pledge follows:¹

In view of our earnest desire to co-operate and leave aside [every possibility of] friction in the present grave international circumstances, and in order to realize the interests of our country and ensure the normal constitutional procedure, it was decided:

(1) A national coalition government should be formed, whose head would be selected by His Highness the Regent in accordance with constitutional and traditional consultations.

(2) All former Prime Ministers and public men should co-operate with such a government, whether [they were members] of it or not. Those who could not join such a government for any cogent reason, should [not only] refrain from opposition but should co-operate with it.

(3) This agreement is to be signed and submitted to His Highness the Regent.

Jamil-Midfa'i, Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, Naji Shawkat, Naji as-Suwaydi,
Nuri as-Sa'id, Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, Ali Jawdat.

While the leading politicians had willingly given such a pledge to support the powers of the Regent, Rashid Ali, who must have congratulated himself on achieving such a political manœuvre, construed the pledge to imply that his political opponents would at least refrain from opposing him should he be able to succeed General Nuri as Prime Minister.²

Rashid Ali's next step was to procure the fall of General Nuri's Cabinet. As chief of the Royal *Diwan*, he was able to intrigue against that Cabinet by pointing out to the Regent that General Nuri's position had been undermined by his implication of his political opponents in the assassination of Rustum Haydar. Rashid Ali, needless to say, was not the only politician who bitterly complained to the Regent about the trial of Rustum's alleged murderers; other prominent politicians, probably inspired or encouraged by Rashid Ali, endorsed the latter's opinion and joined with him in alienating the sympathies of the Regent from General Nuri's Cabinet. General

¹ See text in the Regent's speech which was broadcast to the nation on 14 July 1941 following the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime. Neither the date nor the circumstances which preceded the signing of the document were stated in that speech. See *Speech by His Royal Highness Amir Abd al-Ilah, Regent of Iraq* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1941), pp. 5-6. (In Arabic.)

² For a statement to this effect made by Jamil al-Midfa'i in the Senate see *Proceedings of the Senate*, 17th Session, 1942-3, p. 504.

Nuri's difficulties within his Cabinet have already been dealt with. Owing to internal dissension as well as to outside intrigues, he was finally compelled to resign on 31 March 1940. This change of Prime Minister was the first since 1935 to take place without resort to a military coup d'état.

The Regent immediately called upon Rashid Ali, who was most anxious to seize the opportunity, to form the new Cabinet on 31 March. Rashid Ali assumed the portfolio of Interior in addition to the Premiership, while the portfolio of Defence was reserved for General Taha al-Hashimi. The Regent, however, in order to ensure continuity in Iraq's foreign policy, insisted that the portfolio of Foreign Affairs was to be offered to General Nuri. The new Government was then hailed by the local press as a 'Cabinet of national coalition', since several outstanding leaders had joined with a view to inspiring confidence and stability throughout the country during the war.

Rashid Ali did not commit himself to a new policy, but merely declared in Parliament on 6 April 1940, that the programme of his Cabinet was 'not different from those of most of its predecessors, and more especially that of Nuri as-Sa'id, most of the members of which are in the present Cabinet'. With regard to foreign policy, Rashid Ali stated that his Cabinet aims were:¹

(1) the strengthening of the principle of Arab alliance and the continuation of our endeavours to achieve the national aspirations of the neighbouring Arab countries. . . ; (2) the strengthening of [our] friendly relations and alliance with Great Britain, *based on mutual interest*; (3) the strengthening of [our] friendly relations and co-operation with the Powers of the Sa'dabad Pact; (4) the continuation of [our] friendly relations with *all States which are friendly towards us*. . . .

The official policy of the Rashid Ali Government was the continuation of the Anglo-Iraqi alliance, but the majority of the people, and more especially the ultra-nationalists, had counted on a radical change in policy, since the new Prime Minister was unfavourably disposed towards the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty owing both to his strong nationalistic background and to his ideas as a former Ikha member when, it will be recalled, he had violently opposed the signing of that treaty. When Rashid Ali came into power, however, he tried at first not to effect a change in Iraq's foreign policy; but the above state-

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1939, pp. 321-2. (Italics mine.)

ment, when analysed in the light of subsequent events, is seen to be so carefully phrased in broad and general terms that it well fitted in with his actual conduct during his tenure of office until he was forced to resign in February 1941.

THE RISING TIDE OF ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

Rashid Ali, contrary to the prevailing impression, did not himself arouse anti-British feeling. Opinion had indeed so radically changed in Iraq that Rashid Ali, undoubtedly to his great satisfaction, drifted into the leadership of a movement which had been long in the making.

The revival of anti-British feeling in Iraq was not an isolated phenomenon confined to Iraq. The failure of the general Arab nationalist movement to achieve the unity and independence of the Arab countries was one cause, and there were other factors peculiar to Iraq. Latent anti-British feeling was aroused and aggravated by the deterioration of the world situation and by the dazzling success of the Fascist States.

It must be pointed out at the outset, however, that there were two schools of thought with regard to the nationalist movement in Iraq. The first may be called the pan-Arab school, which advocated ultra-nationalistic ideas and was by its very nature opposed to the two dominating Powers in the Arab world, Great Britain and France, since it was greatly disappointed in the way these Powers were handling the Palestine and Syrian problems. This school was made up of the bulk of the Iraqi ultra-nationalists as well as those Arab nationalists who came to Iraq either as political exiles or as Government officials and teachers. The other school of thought was more moderate in its nationalist programme and reflected the more mature ideas of the Iraqi elder politicians who were, on the whole, favourably disposed towards Britain and foresaw grave dangers to the Arab world from the identification of Arab nationalism with totalitarian ideologies. This school claimed to represent more closely the moderate policy and attitude of King Faysal I in dealing with Great Britain. The pan-Arab school, however, also claimed to derive its ideology from the broad pan-Arab ideas of Faysal, which, however, were not clearly evident in his actual conduct of foreign policy. Owing both to the deterioration of world conditions and to the trend in local politics, the position of the moderate school had been seriously undermined and the pan-Arabs had become predominant in Iraqi society. It is this latter school with which we are now chiefly concerned.

Of the circumstances confined to Iraq which helped to revive ultra-nationalist ideas, the fact that the emancipation of Iraq from the mandate system took place at a very critical period in the history of the League of Nations was one. It was a period which was unfavourable to the Western democracies. A year before Iraq achieved her independence, in 1931, Japan had defied the League and invaded Manchuria. In 1933, a year after Iraq's independence, the Nazis came into power in Germany and immediately afterwards embarked on an active propaganda in the Middle East unfavourable to Britain and France, and exploited certain grievances against them. Iraq's rise to Statehood was thus neither achieved in the high days of the League, when the *amour propre* of the new State could have been gratified by its attaining a dignified seat in a world Assembly, nor in peaceful and salutary conditions in the Arab world—pan-Arab feeling had just been revived in Syria and Palestine in consequence of Syria's refusal to ratify the abortive Treaty of 1933, and of the sudden increase in Zionist immigration into Palestine following the Nazi rise to power in Germany.

The latent causes of any nationalist upheaval in the Arab world were inherent in the unsatisfactory settlement following the First World War. Great Britain had promised the Arabs the realization of their national aspirations, namely, freedom from Turkish dominion and the establishment of a united Arab Kingdom comprising, in the main, the Fertile Crescent and the Arab Peninsula. By the peace settlement, however, the Fertile Crescent was neatly divided into separate territories under British and French mandate, while the Arab Peninsula, which was left to work out its own salvation, was exposed to foreign influence on its borders. The Arab nationalists, needless to say, were far from being satisfied by such an arrangement, since they were not prepared to accept any settlement short of unity and complete independence. They wanted independence as a matter of right, as embodied in Great Britain's pledges to Sharif Husayn, rather than as a matter of capacity for self-government as laid down in the mandates system. Failing to achieve unity and independence, the Arab nationalists naturally contended that both Britain and France had deliberately followed a policy of *divide et impera* by creating small and weak States in order to satisfy their imperialist designs. Great Britain, perhaps, would have allowed a greater degree of unity among the Arab countries if she were the sole European Power in the Arab world; but the insistence of France in claiming Syria and

Lebanon, as assigned to her in the Sykes-Picot agreement (16 May 1916), had decidedly aggravated the tendency of dividing the Arab world into separate spheres of influence.¹

To argue that France was solely responsible for Arab grievances would relieve Britain from any responsibilities in Arab affairs. Great Britain had her own share of such responsibilities. The Arab nationalists, needless to say, had regarded Britain just as responsible as France for the institution of the mandates system and she had been made solely responsible for the creation of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

Unlike France, however, Great Britain realized the strong national grievances of the Arabs and was ready to follow a more sympathetic policy towards them by recognizing, though slowly and piecemeal, certain fundamental national aspirations. The mandates system was from the very beginning applied through treaties of alliance in which certain measures of self-government were granted. The continual anti-mandate agitation had eventually caused Great Britain to bring that abortive system to an end in 1932. It was thus that the much criticized British tutelage and interference in the internal affairs of Iraq came to an end. Great Britain sought by this arrangement to discharge her obligations towards the League of Nations and to satisfy the angry clamours of the Iraqi nationalists for independence. She also, perhaps, sought by such an arrangement to open a new chapter in Anglo-Arab relations with a view to coming to an eventual full understanding with the Arabs once the other pending issues were successfully settled.

This approach to Anglo-Arab relations unfortunately lacked the co-operation of Britain's partner in Arab affairs. When France had finally decided to follow a liberal policy, inspired both by British policy in Iraq as well as by the strength of Arab nationalism, the new policy, which was initiated by the Blum Government, was soon repudiated when that Government fell. The Blum Government, on the model of the Iraqi Treaty, negotiated the treaties of 1936 with Syria and Lebanon. The provisions of these treaties would have satisfied the Syrian nationalists and brought French policy in line

¹ This is well evidenced in the Husayn-MacMahon correspondence which implicitly recognized for France the littoral of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo, but left for the Arabs the rest of the Arab world to be recognized as an 'Arab Kingdom'. See *Correspondence between Sir Henry MacMahon . . . and the Sherif Hussein, July 1915–March 1916*. Cmd. 5957 (Miscellaneous no. 3). London: H.M.S.O., 1930.

with British policy, but after the fall of the Blum Government France contributed to the intensification of Arab nationalism. It was thus that the Arabs had become not only dissatisfied with France but also with Great Britain, partly for her failure to solve the Palestine problem. This dissatisfaction supported the contention of the pan-Arabs, who argued that the European Powers would never withdraw their influence from the Arab world without violence.

With Syria and Palestine under European control, Iraq had naturally become the hot-bed of Arab nationalism. From the time when Faysal was proclaimed King (1921), the Arab nationalists had looked upon Iraq as the most promising country to achieve pan-Arab union. At the outset the prospect of pan-Arabism was not very promising in Iraq since that country had at first to struggle for her own freedom from mandatory control; but when the Iraq mandate was terminated in 1932, a number of Arab nationalists found safe refuge in Iraq and came to regard her as another 'Piedmont' which would eventually achieve the pan-Arab union. These nationalists at once began to revive the pan-Arab dream in the mind of the Iraqis and to fire the imagination of the new generation with the idea of restoring the Arab empire. The pan-Arabs argued that the existing regime in Iraq was an artificial creation of Britain designed to maintain her own imperial interests and therefore unworthy of survival; the only truly Arab national regime would be that in which Iraq would form part of a united Arab State. It was thus that, while Great Britain sought to satisfy the Iraqi nationalists by granting them independence, her efforts fell short because of the rising tide of the pan-Arab movement in Iraq, which was influenced by sources originating outside Iraq.

Pan-Arab ideas found fertile soil among the younger generation in Iraq. The ideology was vividly expounded and diffused by such national societies as the Muthanna Club founded in Baghdad in 1935, the Jawwal Society, and the Futuwwah organization, supported and popularized by Syrian and Palestinian nationalists in Iraq.¹ The Muthanna Club, whose activities and exploits had increasing influence, was at the outset moderate in tone. The club was later dominated by a few ultra-nationalists who had outspoken totalitarian ideas. But there was always a small minority who advised moderation and advocated nationalism and democracy.

¹ For text of the Futuwwah regulation, see *Government Gazette*, no. 1299 (15 May 1939). See also Ettore Rossi, 'L'Istituzione Scolastico Militare "al-Futuwwah" nell'Iraq', *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 20 (April 1940), pp. 157-76.

The ideology of the pan-Arab movement was, perhaps, best expounded in a very readable volume entitled *These Are Our [National] Aims: Those Who Believe in Them Are on Our Side*,¹ which Dr Sami Shawkat, a prominent member of the Muthanna Club, had published in 1939. Though Shawkat was responsible for the main substance of the book, he had not himself written the entire work. He professed himself a firm believer in and a promoter of the pan-Arab ideology, with a totalitarian *Weltanschauung*. As Director-General of Education in 1933 and 1939, and Minister of Education in 1940, he was able to fire the imagination of the Iraqi youth. In his celebrated speech on the 'Art of Death',² which Sami Shawkat had given in Baghdad in the autumn of 1933, he expounded in simple but forceful language his doctrine of power. Copies of the speech, which had great influence in nationalist circles, were circulated and read in all the Iraqi Government high schools. In it Shawkat played on the emotions with his apparently cogent argument that countries like India and Egypt, though they were rich and culturally advanced, were not yet independent States. Countries like Afghanistan and Yaman, on the other hand, though poor and backward, were independent. 'Wealth and knowledge, therefore', declared Sami Shawkat, 'were not the sole means of destroying the foundation of imperialism and shaking off the fetters of submission'. There was, he added, another more important factor which 'shields the honour of nations and prevents their submission to imperialism—it is power'. By power he meant 'the perfection of the art of death'. If life were a right inherent to the individual, so was death in the defence of the life and honour of nations.³

In another speech Sami Shawkat developed the doctrine of 'The Rugged Life'. He appealed to the students to abandon the easy and comfortable life (which was enjoyed by hardly any save a few boys of well-to-do families) and urged them to follow the life of the Arabs in the early Islamic period. He aroused more interest by dwelling on the glorious past of the Arabs and on the future possibilities of their unity.⁴ In a speech made on 16 March 1939, given to high school teachers of history, he went so far as to declare that those history books which discredited the Arabs were to be burned, not except-

¹ Sami Shawkat, *Hathihî Ahdafuna: Man Amana Biha Fahwa Minna* (Baghdad, 1939).

² *Sina'at al-Mawt*.

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 4–6, 30–3, 42–5, 50–5, 57–61, 62–4.

³ *ibid.* pp. 1–3.

ing the greatest Arabic work on the philosophy of history by Ibn Khaldun.¹

The teachings of Sami Shawkat were reinforced by the Government-sponsored Futuwwah movement, which required all high school boys to wear military uniforms, to be trained in the use of rifles and guns, and to be disciplined as soldiers. Sami Shawkat, himself wearing uniform, led on horseback the colourful parades of Iraqi youth. The Futuwwah movement was only a step in the preparation of the new generation for the day when the entire nation was to be called on to realize the pan-Arab dream. The Futuwwah had such an immense appeal, encouraged by almost all national organizations and the press that it elevated its leader to Cabinet rank. But Sami's sincerity was seriously questioned when he was the first to desert the Futuwwah when the day had come for it to contribute its share in the war against Britain.

To argue, therefore, that the Rashid Ali movement was a purely Iraqi affair or a sudden outburst of anti-British feeling is hardly tenable given this background. Rashid Ali, to be sure, was not accepted by the Iraqi nationalists without certain mental reservations, owing both to his shrewdness and his unscrupulous methods; but he came forward at the opportune moment to lead a movement which gratified the latent feelings of discontented Iraqis and the national aspirations of the pan-Arabs.

THE FALL OF FRANCE

The developments in the international situation were in favour of the ultra-nationalists. Following General Nuri's fall from power in March 1940, the moderates were put into the background and the ultra-nationalists, civil and military, began to come to the fore. Thus Rashid Ali's coming into power, coinciding with the rising tide of anti-British feeling, gave great satisfaction to the pan-Arab and extremist elements. Rashid Ali, indeed, did not commit himself at the outset to any pro-Axis policy, and even went so far as to declare, it will be recalled, that his Cabinet was to follow the policy of its predecessor. He had, it is true, at no time been friendly towards Great Britain, but he did not return to power this time for the sole object of opposing her.

The fall of France in June 1940, however, had greatly upset the balance, while Axis propaganda gave lavish assurances of a brighter

¹ ibid. p. 44. See an account of the gathering in *al-Bilad*, 17 March 1939.

and more prosperous life for the Arabs if Germany won the war. The prevailing opinion in Iraq was that England, after the fall of France, had no chance of survival. The Iraqi nationalists, perhaps, were not wiser than those French generals who advised their Prime Minister after their collapse, that 'in three weeks England will have her neck wrung like a chicken!' To those Iraqi nationalists the Anglo-Iraqi alliance had become a liability rather than an asset which put the very existence of their country in jeopardy. What made matters worse was that in the same month in which France collapsed, Britain invoked her Treaty of Alliance and decided to send troops to Iraq. Furthermore, when Italy had entered the war, Iraq was requested to sever her relations with that Power.

In the circumstances the dominant group in the army, who always had a say in the politics of the country, were opposed to further commitments with Britain and were in favour of remaining neutral in the present struggle. Rashid Ali's Cabinet, however, was divided on the question of what formal attitude it would follow. General Nuri as-Sa'id, the Foreign Minister, and Amin Zaki, Minister of Communications and Works, were in one camp, and Naji Shawkat, Minister of Justice, who had the sympathy of almost all the other ministers, was in the other, while the Regent's sympathies were on the side of the former. Iraq's position after the fall of France was the subject of several heated Cabinet discussions. In an interview with the writer, Amin Zaki pointed out that he and General Nuri advocated taking a stand, at any cost, with Great Britain. The other group, while they all were in favour of neutrality went—at least some of them—so far as to oppose fulfilment of Iraq's treaty obligations. It was finally decided, in order to ease the tension, to sound the position of Turkey as an ally of Great Britain (in her Treaty of 1939) and of Iraq by virtue of the Sa'dabad Pact.

On 20 June 1940, it was officially announced that the Iraqi Government had decided to send General Nuri and Naji Shawkat to Ankara on an official mission, for the reason that 'Iraq should seek consultations with Turkey on the present momentous issues, since both countries are signatories of the Sa'dabad Pact'. The Iraqi delegation arrived in Ankara on 24 June and were received by Sarajoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister. The consultation, which lasted a week, dealt with the attitude of the two neighbouring countries towards Britain and Germany, following the fall of France. Turkey had officially declared non-belligerency on the same day as Italy

entered the war, and Iraq, it seems, was advised to assume a similar attitude.¹ General Nuri returned to Iraq immediately afterwards, but Naji Shawkat, 'for medical reasons', as it was then announced, decided to go on to Istanbul.² Naji Shawkat intimated later that he was advised, during his stay in Turkey, to contact von Papen, the German Minister to Turkey, in order to sound the German attitude towards Iraq and the Arab countries in the event of a German victory. Naji Shawkat reported that von Papen declared that Germany had always sympathized with the national aspirations of the Arabs. Von Papen promised to discuss the matter with Hitler and, it seems, the consultation bore fruit in Germany's formal declaration of her sympathies with Arab aspirations on 23 October 1940.

STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND GREAT BRITAIN

It was at this time of bewilderment and clash of loyalties that Great Britain invoked her Treaty of Alliance with Iraq and brought matters to a head. On 21 June 1940, one day before the formal signing of France's capitulation, Sir Basil Newton, His Majesty's Ambassador to Iraq, sent a note to the Iraqi Government requesting its approval for landing British forces in Basrah to pass across Iraqi territory to Haifa in Palestine. On 22 June 1940 the Iraqi Government replied favourably to the Ambassador's note; but on 1 July 1940 it sent another note in which it was stated that on referring the British request to the Iraqi Supreme Defence Council, it was decided that the landing of British forces was permitted, in accordance with Annexure 7 of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, only if these forces were to be moved in the areas west of a line between the Persian Gulf and the River Euphrates. This stipulation was based on a confidential letter sent to the Iraqi Government by Sir Francis Humphrys, then His Majesty's High Commissioner in Iraq, on 15 July 1930, which interpreted the term 'movement of forces . . . in transit across Iraq' (Annexure 7) to this effect. The attitude of the Iraqi Government, it seems, was to make use of this interpretation in order to avoid committing Iraq to a too pro-British policy and thus to avoid Axis hostilities. But this

¹ In an interview with the writer, General Nuri summed up the situation thus. He pointed out that Naji Shawkat, after his return from Turkey, submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet which embodied in detail Turkey's attitude and advice to Iraq. The writer, however, has not been able to see that memorandum.

² See *Iraq Times*, 1 July 1940. General Nuri confirmed the medical reason and said that Naji Shawkat told him that he was suffering from earache.

attitude was at once questioned by Great Britain and the issue that followed was essentially at the outset a question of interpreting the Treaty of Alliance. Sir Basil Newton argued that he had invoked Article 4, rather than Annexure 7, of that treaty. This disagreement on the interpretation of the treaty arose in part from its rather vague and general character which Great Britain had possibly expected to use to her own advantage. In practice, however, it enabled the Rashid Ali Government to limit help to Great Britain. It may be asked in what circumstances were Article 4 or Annexure 7 to be applied. There was nothing in the treaty that helped to clarify this. The issue, however, was finally settled on 16 July 1940, when the Rashid Ali Government approved the landing of British forces, but stated that the forces should not stay long on Iraqi territory and that military camps were not to be established.¹ This reflected a sincere desire to remain neutral during the struggle, but also demonstrated the non-co-operative attitude of the Rashid Ali Cabinet.

A more violent issue that arose was in connexion with breaking off diplomatic relations with Italy. The request, it seems, was not made directly by Great Britain; but her Ambassador had conversations with General Nuri, the Foreign Minister, and an indirect request was made which prompted the latter to submit a memorandum on the matter to the Iraqi Cabinet. General Nuri's proposal was supported only by Amin Zaki, Minister of Communications and Works, while it was violently opposed by Naji Shawkat, Minister of Justice, and was therefore rejected by the majority of the Cabinet. The prevailing opinion was that Iraq's treaty obligations did not require her to take a hostile attitude towards Britain's enemies. It may be argued in this case, too, that the treaty was general in character and could not be invoked for such a specific action; but it was possible to make a case in favour of Great Britain as well. Article 1 provided for 'full and frank consultation' in all matters of foreign policy which 'may affect their common interests'. It also stipulated that 'each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes not to adopt in foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or might create difficulties for the other party thereto'. The Rashid Ali Government contended that its attitude was neutral and that there was nothing in its conduct inconsistent with the treaty of alliance. The British Em-

¹ For a discussion on this issue from Rashid Ali's point of view, see the White Book which was published, but had not been put into circulation, by the Rashid Ali Government, pp. 21-2.

bassy complained that the Italian Minister in Baghdad had become the rallying-point for Axis sympathizers in Iraq. The weakness in Rashid Ali's argument was that Iraq, even as a neutral State, was not bound to tolerate the diplomatic representative of a foreign country who abused his position. If such an action were not a sufficient cause for breaking off diplomatic relations with Italy, it certainly was a violation of diplomatic 'propriety', and the Iraqi Government, short of demanding recall of the Minister, should have registered a protest in the matter.

Various rumours were subsequently circulated that the Rashid Ali Government was contemplating improvement of its relations with the Axis Powers. Early in October 1940 it was announced that the Iraqi Government had concluded a barter agreement with Japan in which the latter offered to buy all the cotton produce of 1940 (as well as the remaining amount of the previous year) on favourable terms. It was also announced that the Iraqi Government was considering the question of opening an Iraqi Consulate in Tokyo.¹ On 23 October 1940, a stirring declaration in Arabic was broadcast from Rome and Berlin in which the Italian and German Governments, in joint agreement, expressed sympathy with Arab national aspirations. It was pledged that the Arabs could depend on Germany and Italy to achieve their full independence. The text of the declaration follows:²

Great Britain watches with much preoccupation the increasing sympathies of the Arab countries with the Axis Powers, whom [the Arabs] await [as their] liberators from British oppression. [Great Britain] is endeavouring to oppose this movement of sympathy [to the Axis] and is trying to show that the aim of Italy and Germany is [merely] to occupy and dominate the Arab countries.

The Italian Government, in order to counteract this malicious propaganda and appease the Arabs regarding Italy's political [aims], confirms what has already been broadcast in Arabic that [Italy] has always been animated with the same sentiment of friendship towards the Arabs. [Italy] desires to see the [Arab countries] prosper and occupy among [other] peoples of the world a place corresponding to their natural and historical importance. Italy has always watched with interest the struggle [of the Arabs] to achieve their independence and, in striving for this end, they can depend upon the full sympathy of Italy in future.

Italy makes this declaration in full agreement with Germany.

¹ See *al-Bilad*, 7 and 14 October 1940.

² See Ettore Rossi, *Documenti sull' Origini e gli Sviluppi della Questione Araba 1875-1944* (Rome, 1944) p. 225. A summary of the declaration was published in all the Arabic daily papers with comments. See *al-Istiqlal*, 24 October 1940.

The Axis declaration, which was reiterated time and again from both the Berlin and Rome radio stations, aroused great interest among the Arabs and was favourably commented upon in the Iraqi press. *Al-Istiqlal*, in a leading article, welcomed the declaration but did not attack Britain.¹ Other local papers also commented favourably on the declaration but, it seems, no paper was permitted to attack the declaration and defend Great Britain. Rumours circulated that the Rashid Ali Government was contemplating the reopening of diplomatic relations with Germany either in response to a request made by Germany through the Italian Minister in Baghdad or in response to a proposal to be made by one of the local papers. The comments of the Iraqi press became increasingly hostile towards Great Britain.²

In these circumstances the British Ambassador in Baghdad, Sir Basil Newton, was instructed by his Government to make representations to the Rashid Ali Government. He first addressed complaints to General Nuri, the Foreign Minister, but these had little effect. With regard to opening diplomatic relations with Germany, Sir Basil Newton made representation in person at the Iraqi Foreign Office. If Iraq were to resume her relations with Germany, he said, England would reconsider her relations with Iraq. This warning was discussed by the Rashid Ali Cabinet on 27 November 1940, and the Iraqi Foreign Minister was instructed to reply to the Ambassador that the Iraqi Government had no knowledge of the desire of the German Government to resume diplomatic relations with Iraq. When this reply was communicated to the British Ambassador, the latter remarked that His Majesty's Government had no confidence in the Prime Minister of Iraq, and that Iraq had to choose between her friendship with Great Britain and her Prime Minister.³

This statement naturally aroused the indignation of Rashid Ali, who immediately instructed the Iraqi Foreign Office to ask for confirmation from the British Foreign Office. The Iraqi chargé d'affaires had an audience with Lord Halifax on 29 November 1940, and communicated to him the reactions of the Rashid Ali Government to Sir Basil Newton's statement. Lord Halifax remarked that Great Britain was forced, in the light of certain actions inconsistent with

¹ See 'Arab [National] Objectives and the Joint Declaration of Germany and Italy', *al-Istiqlal*, 25 and 28 October 1940.

² See [Siddiq Shanshal], 'The Attitude of Iraq towards the International Situation', *al-Bilad*, 19 December 1940.

³ See a statement to this effect by Naji as-Suwaidi in the Senate on 27 February 1941. *Proceedings of the Senate*, 15th Session, 1940-1, p. 78.

the Treaty of Alliance, to take such a stand. The substance of that interview was subsequently communicated to the British Ambassador in Baghdad who, in turn, communicated it to the Iraqi Foreign Minister on 4 December, and to the Regent on 5 December 1940. It was reiterated that Britain 'could not conceal from the Iraqi Government that we [the British Government] have not received from the Prime Minister the degree of co-operation to which we felt entitled under the treaty'. As to the protest made by the Iraqi Government against England's interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, the Foreign Secretary said: 'We had no desire to interfere in internal affairs nor to do anything inconsistent with the dignity of the Iraqi State.' But with regard to the statement that Iraq had to choose between Britain's friendship and Rashid Ali, Lord Halifax replied: 'I fully recognize the gravity of this step, but I have no doubt at all that the continuity of the present state of affairs was not conducive to the maintenance of good relations which we all desire. . . .'

In the meantime pressure was put on Rashid Ali by the Government of the United States, probably at the instance of Britain, in order to induce him to abide by Iraq's treaty obligations. The Axis Powers continued to lavish assurances upon the Arabs and it was feared that Rashid might be tempted to accept German support and gamble for higher stakes. On 5 December 1940, Mr Paul Knabenshue, the American Minister, had an audience with Rashid Ali in the presence of the Iraqi Foreign Minister, General Nuri, in which he delivered a note, which was the first of its kind in the history of American-Iraqi relations. In that note America's 'keen interest in the welfare of Iraq' and 'anxiety' lest Iraq should lose her independence were emphasized. The note stated that United States policy was to assist Great Britain with all means available short of a declaration of war. The American Government, accordingly, 'advised' the Iraqi Government to 'co-operate' with the British Government, for the Government of the United States is 'convinced, and sufficient evidence is available to show, that should Great Britain lose the war, Iraq would inevitably lose her independence which would be a calamity for all the countries of the Near East'. Furthermore, the Turkish Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs intimated to the Iraqi Minister in Ankara that he had received news from the Turkish Ambassador in Washington informing him that he had learned from official American sources that the Iraqi Government was likely to reopen diplomatic relations with Germany. The Iraqi Minister in

Ankara was requested to inform the Turkish Government of the truth of this news. In his memorandum to Rashid Ali on 15 December 1940 General Nuri stated:

When the Iraq Minister mentioned to the Turkish Under Secretary of State the contents of the Speech from the Throne on the subject, the latter said that he was inclined to believe that the policy of the Iraqi Government was to co-operate with Great Britain. Yet he would be very pleased if he could have an assurance contradicting the information he had received from their Ambassador at Washington.¹

Great Britain was able to exercise further pressure on Rashid Ali by refusing to supply Iraq with dollars or weapons. The latter sanction was a long-standing one which had antagonized the Iraqi army officers. As has been stated apologetically by a well-known English writer, Freya Stark, the problem had originated thus:²

It was most unfortunate that the enlargement of the Iraqi forces should coincide with our own rearmament. Iraq under her treaty rights was entitled to the best and newest we could provide: she had the same priority as the Dominions: but in fact we were unable to supply her until our own reorganization was completed, and the wail for armaments went up continuously. . . . Her [Iraqi] insistence on the most up-to-date weapons was relinquished; arrangements were made for her to have older guns reconditioned as our own troops were supplied with new; we have a credit of £1,250,000; but the long delays which attended this satisfactory arrangement were so formidable that September 1939 was upon us before the negotiations were completed.

The coming of the war had aggravated the problem when Great Britain not only needed weapons for her own defence but also became naturally suspicious lest weapons should be used by the Rashid Ali Government against British interests. When the Iraqi Government expressed a desire to buy weapons from the United States, it had no adequate supplies of dollars to do so, nor was Great Britain willing to supply the dollars. The request of the Iraqi Government was made to Mr Anthony Eden, the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 9 January 1941. Mr Eden replied that Great Britain supplied dollars only to her 'loyal allies', such as Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. When he was reminded that Iraq was also the ally of Great Britain, he replied in the affirmative with a smile, but said that there were a few men in Iraq who wanted 'to flirt' with the Axis Powers. 'Un-

¹ See text of the note as reproduced in General Nuri's Memorandum to Rashid Ali on 15 December 1940, in Appendix III.

² *The Times*, 27 June 1941, p. 5.

fortunately', said Mr. Eden, 'there was much that had been unsatisfactory in the attitude of Iraq recently.' If Iraq's attitude were modified, he continued, and showed 'loyal co-operation', then 'we could consider the question of an assignment'. 'Until that happened', concluded Mr. Eden, we 'could give no hope whatever that dollars could be made available from us for purposes for which Iraq needed them.'

The issue between Iraq and Great Britain had been reduced, in the last analysis, merely to the question of removing Rashid Ali from the Premiership. It was most unfortunate that the misunderstanding between the two countries, which should have been more carefully handled in order to avoid conflict, had been accentuated by selecting Rashid Ali as a scapegoat for the whole affair. It seems to the writer that Rashid Ali, anti-British though he was at heart, was too shrewd to sacrifice his position merely for the sake of antagonizing Great Britain. He was quite prepared to reconcile British interests with the demands of his extremist supporters. The insistence of Britain that he be removed from the Premiership, which aroused his indignation and disgraced him in the eyes of his colleagues, naturally pushed him to throw in his lot with the extremists, and actually precipitated another coup d'état. In taking this step the British Foreign Office either acted without advice from its diplomats in Baghdad or was badly advised. When Rashid Ali was removed, Prime Minister Winston Churchill reported with great satisfaction to the House of Commons (7 May 1941) that the 'pronounced' pro-Axis Rashid Ali was 'removed from power at our instance'¹.

In analysing the affair in retrospect with General Nuri as-Sa'îd,² the writer expressed doubt that Rashid Ali actually wanted to clash with the British authorities in Baghdad. General Nuri at once shared this opinion and argued that Rashid Ali's political opponents, who unwisely intrigued against him at the British Embassy, were responsible for the misunderstanding between him and Great Britain.³ If General Nuri's view were correct, it would be the fault of none other than the British authorities in Baghdad for bringing matters to a head by advising their home Government to request the removal of Rashid Ali.

¹ *Hansard* (Commons), 5th Series, vol. 371, cols. 942-3.

² In an interview with General Nuri in Baghdad on 16 May 1947.

³ Naji as-Suwaydi, in a statement made in the Senate on 27 February 1941, maintained that the misunderstanding between Iraq and Britain, in its last phases, had become a purely personal one between Rashid Ali and the British authorities (*Proceedings of the Senate*, 15th Session, 1940-1, p. 78).

General Nuri, who regarded the whole affair with regret, is of the opinion that the Rashid Ali coup d'état could have been avoided if Great Britain had been able to make a promise with regard to the Palestine question. As he stated in his memorandum of 15 December 1940, he regarded 'the Palestine question [as] the root of all the evils which disturb and weaken Anglo-Iraqi relations. Any improvement in this respect will tend to improve and strengthen these relations.' Acting on this assumption, General Nuri tried to reconcile the Iraqi, as well as the Arab, nationalists with Great Britain. When Colonel S. F. Newcombe came out to Baghdad in July 1940 on semi-official business, General Nuri, then Foreign Minister, in agreement with Prime Minister Rashid Ali, held several meetings at which Haj Amin Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Jamal Husayni, and Musa al-Alami were present. A suggestion was transmitted through Colonel Newcombe, and with his agreement, to the British Government for the settlement of the Palestine problem: the White Paper of 1939 was to be accepted as the basis of the Palestine settlement and the transition period was to be fixed at ten years. The Iraqi Government decided, in August 1940, that in return for such a settlement it would make a formal declaration of war on the Axis Powers and place one-half of the Iraqi forces at the disposal of the Middle East Command for service outside Iraq. General Nuri left for Cairo to communicate the decision of the Iraqi Government to General Wavell, and the whole arrangement was referred to London, but there was no response from the British Government. It was most unfortunate that no reply was made either to Iraq or to the Palestinian leaders, since the British Government's silence was construed to mean that no just settlement was contemplated in London. From that time on, declared General Nuri to the writer, the attitude of the Iraqi nationalists became increasingly hostile towards England.

SCHISM IN THE RASHID ALI CABINET

A schism in the Rashid Ali Cabinet had developed before the developments described above took place, but it was accentuated by diplomatic pressure. The two extreme members of the Cabinet, it will be remembered, advocated diametrically opposite policies, while the Prime Minister, whose sympathies were probably with Naji Shawkat, declared that he was willing to support General Nuri's policy in order to fulfil Iraq's treaty obligations. The dominant party in the army, however, was extremely anti-British and pressed for

non-co-operation with England. Rashid Ali, realizing that he was opposed by Britain and that his remaining in power was dependent on the army's support, promised both the army and Naji Shawkat that he was espousing their cause, while he assured both the Regent and General Nuri that he was faithful to the spirit and letter of the Treaty of Alliance.

Rashid Ali's attitude on the application of the treaty was to afford Great Britain all facilities, as stated in Article 4 and Annexure 7, without committing Iraq to giving assistance or changing Iraq's position from non-belligerency. Both Naji Shawkat and General Nuri, as a matter of fact, expressed more radical ideas about the application, or non-application, of the treaty. Naji Shawkat, who was not sympathetic to Great Britain, declared that Iraq was not bound to antagonize Britain's enemies; while General Nuri, who foresaw grave dangers from Axis penetration into the Arab world, was in favour of increasing Anglo-Iraqi co-operation. General Nuri, counting on the Regent's authority, probably sought to compel Rashid Ali to resign in order that he himself should assume the Premiership and carry out his policy; while Rashid Ali, backed by the army, felt well entrenched in power and was determined never to yield to his opponents.

At the outset General Nuri tried, by the weight of his argument, to influence the Prime Minister. In a memorandum which he submitted to Rashid Ali on 15 December 1940, General Nuri reviewed the situation in Iraq and stated his own views on foreign policy. He argued that co-operation with Great Britain and the United States would be more advantageous to Iraq and the Arabs and strongly urged the establishment of an Iraqi legation in Washington. He contended that better relations with these Powers would help to solve the Palestine problem in favour of the Arabs, since the United States 'have already begun to show their interest in this question'.¹

General Nuri's advice was not heeded and he therefore began to contemplate resignation from the Cabinet. In the examination of the Foreign Affairs budget by the Parliamentary Financial Committee, General Nuri deliberately refused to attend the meetings in order to embarrass Rashid Ali in Parliament. Rashid Ali, in the role of patriot and guardian of his country's rights, appeared before the Parliamentary Financial Committee on 21 December 1940, to answer questions

¹ See text of General Nuri's Memorandum, Appendix III.

on foreign policy. He made the following statement on Iraq's foreign policy:¹

The world is passing through critical circumstances . . . and the position of small States is indeed very difficult. The essential principles of our foreign policy are the following:

(1) The maintenance of the security of the country; avoidance of any action that might lead to involving her in this war; and the exertion of all possible efforts in order to maintain the peace which is enjoyed throughout the country in spite of the present international struggle, and in order to make it possible for the people to carry on their fruitful work and to devote all their efforts to serve their country or to defend her in case of any [foreign] aggression.

(2) The achievement of the [Arab] national ideas which Iraq had determined to fulfil, since Iraq, as one of the independent Arab countries, is in a position to realize the [Arab] national aspirations.

(3) The fulfilment of our international obligations such as the Treaty of Arab Friendship and the [Sa'dabad] non-aggression pact, to which we are bound with our neighbours. As for our obligations to our ally Great Britain, as stipulated in our treaty with her, we have always observed them in letter and spirit, and we would like to continue to strengthen our friendship with her on a basis of mutual interest. Our cordial relations are increasingly developing with other friendly Powers.

My colleagues have, together with me, determined faithfully to follow a policy, based on the foregoing three principles. It is obvious enough that the ideals connecting these three principles require great attention and [moral] strength and, therefore, we should not allow any kind of propaganda [to influence us]. The various countries taking part in the present struggle will always try to exploit all possible forces in defence of their own cause, and Iraq, owing to her important position will attract attention. We should therefore know our safe way in this troubled sea in order to be able to protect our country and realize her supreme aspirations.

It is my duty to say that Iraq, as an independent country, should always seek in her conduct to serve her own interests and realize her national aspirations; she therefore should not follow [a policy] which would be inconsistent with those interests and aspirations.

While Rashid Ali's declaration paid lip service to Anglo-Iraqi friendship, it dwelt much more on Iraq's own interests and national aspirations. Rumours were circulated that General Nuri and his group were advocating co-operation with Great Britain to the extent of declaring war on the Axis Powers; Rashid Ali's policy of keeping Iraq out of the war therefore increased his prestige. His statement

¹ See text of the Statement in Arabic in *al-Bilad*, 22 December 1940.

was favourably commented upon in the local press,¹ and was over-credulously acclaimed and applauded by the ultra-nationalists.²

Conflicting rumours about Rashid Ali's policy and dissension in his Cabinet were bound to have repercussions in Parliament. The moderate Iraqi nationalists who were, to be sure, not prepared to support General Nuri's policy with regard to Anglo-Iraqi co-operation, were nevertheless opposed to Rashid Ali's extreme position in regard to Iraq's treaty obligations to Great Britain. Jamil al-Midfa'i, an honest and moderate nationalist among the elder Iraqi politicians, was persuaded by the moderate members of Parliament to remonstrate with Rashid Ali on denying Great Britain her rights under the treaty. On 4 January 1941 Midfa'i raised the question in the Senate. He wanted to inquire:³

(1) Has Iraq been approached with a request to undertake commitments in excess of her treaty of alliance with Great Britain which might result in plunging this country into the war?

(2) Is the absence of the responsible Minister [of Foreign Affairs] due to any difference of opinion with regard to foreign policy?

Rashid Ali, without hesitation, made the following reply:

The answer to the two questions is in the negative. . . . For there has been no request from our ally in excess of the treaty, nor is there [any] difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs with regard to [our] foreign policy.

Midfa'i, thanking the Prime Minister for his reply and assuming that there was in fact a difference of opinion between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister, made the following statement:

Every one of us wishes that there should be no difference among ministers, more particularly as regards foreign policy. For our foreign policy with regard to our ally Great Britain is a traditional policy on which Iraq's independence and integrity are based. We should, [therefore], uphold [such a policy] as it is consistent with our own interest, geographically, economically and militarily. . . . We should not be misled by certain mischievous words or publications into what may not be [consistent] with Iraq's interests.

Iraq is fully independent and had achieved her independence at a time when British strength was at its maximum, thanks to: first, the sacrifices borne [by Iraq] and the blood shed in the Iraqi revolt which owed its

¹ See [Ali Haydar Sulayman], 'Iraq's Foreign Policy', *al-Bilad*, 24 December 1940; [Siddiq Shanshal], 'The State Should be Equal to its International Obligations', *al-Bilad*, 26 December 1940.

² See *al-Itiqdāl*, 23, 25, and 26 December 1940.

³ *Proceedings of the Senate*, 15th Session, 1940-1, pp. 42-3.

spirit to the great Arab Revolt; secondly, the great personality of the late King Faysal, and the co-operation of those persons around him who knew how to realize Iraq's [national] interests; thirdly, we should also add the nobility and political wisdom and character of the British people who [readily] appreciated that Iraq was fit for independence and the enjoyment of her natural rights. . . .

It is clear, therefore, that any policy which is inconsistent with these considerations could not be in the interests of Iraq nor should it be regarded as the policy of Iraq. Anyone who is working against such a traditional policy would represent only his own personal policy which Iraq could not approve. . . .

Midfa'i's statement in the Senate was hailed as the sound policy which Iraq had to follow and may be regarded as expressing the position of the moderate Iraqi nationalists.

THE FIFTH COUP D'ÉTAT

Great Britain's request to remove Rashid Ali from the Premiership induced the Regent to intervene and to use his influence to force Rashid Ali to resign. At the outset the Regent only expressed his desire, through a senior official at the Royal *Diwan*, for the Cabinet to resign. This prompted Prime Minister Rashid Ali, Naji as-Suwaydi, Minister of Finance, and Taha al-Hashimi, Minister of Defence, to request an audience with the Regent in which they pointed out that the King, under the constitution, had no right to request the Cabinet to resign.¹ This incident resulted in an obvious coolness between the Prime Minister and the Regent; and the latter, in order to show his dissatisfaction with the Cabinet's conduct, often absented himself from the Royal *Diwan*, which meant that a number of Cabinet decisions and ordinances were either delayed or not approved at all.

General Taha al-Hashimi, who tried to resolve the issue, requested an audience with the Regent and pointed out to him that since matters had gone from bad to worse and the Cabinet could no longer continue in office, it was nevertheless not proper that the Regent should request the Cabinet to resign at the behest of Britain.² He therefore proposed that either both General Nuri and Naji Shawkat should resign, since they were two extreme protagonists of opposing policies; or that the whole Cabinet should resign on condition that

¹ The constitution of Iraq, before the second amendment, was silent on this matter. Practice was, however, that the King could not dismiss a Cabinet. See General Taha's subsequent declarations in Parliament, *Proceedings of the Senate*, 15th Session, 1940–1, pp. 86–7.

² Statement made by General Taha to the writer on 15 December 1946.

Naji as-Suwaydi, Minister of Finance, should form a new Cabinet.¹ General Taha favoured the first alternative, while the Regent preferred the second. Both Rashid Ali and Naji Shawkat, though discredited by the Regent had, however, been assured of the army's loyalty. They were therefore not prepared to meet the Regent's request. When General Nuri presented his resignation on 21 January 1941, Naji Shawkat did not present his, and it seemed as if there were a plot to drop only General Nuri from the Cabinet.² It was just too late when Prime Minister Rashid Ali and General Taha had an audience with the Regent on 25 January 1941, and informed him that Naji Shawkat had also presented his letter of resignation. The Regent, who at this stage had become suspicious of Rashid Ali, insisted that the whole Cabinet should resign and again asked for Rashid Ali's resignation.

On 26 January 1941 the Cabinet held a meeting to discuss the crisis. The prevailing opinion was that the Cabinet should resign, but Rashid Ali would not tender his resignation. The other ministers, except the Minister of Social Affairs, presented their resignations individually. This meant that the Cabinet's life should have come to an end.³

At this juncture Rashid Ali, who had already been promised the backing of the army, actually invited the Four Colonels to intervene. It was decided to dispatch Colonel Mahmud Salman, officer commanding the air force, to have an audience with the Regent in order to induce him to keep Rashid Ali in power and accept only the resignations of General Nuri and Naji Shawkat (i.e. to approve General Taha's first alternative). The Regent, in the presence of the President of the Senate, Muhammad as-Sadr, replied that, according to the Iraqi constitution, the selection of a Prime Minister was a prerogative of the King. He therefore advised the army officers to keep out of politics, since the laws of the land prohibited the army's interference in politics.⁴ The Four Colonels, however, insisted on their request and, by ordering the army to be at the ready, compelled the

¹ Speech by the Regent on 14 July 1941 (Baghdad, Government Press, 1941) pp. 6–7.

² *ibid.* p. 4.

³ Article 64 of the constitution, before the second amendment, stated that the number of ministers in the Government should not exceed nine, nor be less than six. It was argued that Rashid Ali's position as a Prime Minister was unconstitutional. Rashid Ali, however, was of the opinion that his Cabinet had not resigned since his letter of resignation was not presented to the Regent.

⁴ The Regent's speech, pp. 9–10.

Regent to acquiesce. A royal decree was issued on 28 January 1941 appointing two new ministers, Yunis as-Sab'awi and Ali Mahmud, to Rashid Ali's Cabinet to replace General Nuri and Naji Shawkat.

On 30 January 1941 Parliament was convened, and though the Prime Minister arrived late, discussion was initiated by Ali Jawdat, who demanded an explanation of what had been taking place behind the scenes. Several other members, in like manner, criticized the conduct of the Government; and one of them, Zamil al-Manna', bluntly asked the Prime Minister to resign.¹ When Rashid Ali appeared in the Chamber and sensed the hostility of the House, he refused to reply to any question raised by his opponents, but feeling that he had been insulted, left the House immediately and proceeded to the Regent with a royal decree in his hand requesting him to sign it in order to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies. The Regent was not in favour of dissolution, but in the circumstances could not oppose Rashid Ali. He asked to be allowed to consider the matter until the evening and said that he would see the Prime Minister that night. Rashid Ali agreed.

The Regent had triumphed. He was advised to leave Baghdad secretly in the afternoon, in order to escape pressure from Rashid Ali and the Four Colonels who constantly threatened him with force. The Regent went to Diwaniyah where General Ibrahim ar-Rawi, officer commanding the Fourth Division, was friendly to him. General Rawi, who did not wish to be involved in politics, was indeed in a very awkward position; but, as a soldier formerly in the service of the Regent's grandfather, King Husayn of Hijaz, he welcomed the Regent as a guest in his house. From Diwaniyah the Regent was able to get in touch with several loyal politicians and entertained the idea, had General Rawi been so disposed, of using the Diwaniyah forces against the Four Colonels in case Rashid Ali refused to resign.

Meanwhile the President of the Senate, acting as mediator, had had several conversations with the Four Colonels and Rashid Ali and advised the latter to resign. Rashid Ali, having failed to dissolve Parliament in the evening and expecting to face a hostile House the next day, felt that he was out-maneuvred and decided to resign. He tendered his resignation by cable to the Regent at Diwaniyah on 31 January 1941. Putting the entire responsibility for the crisis on the Regent, Rashid Ali said:²

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1940, pp. 270–3.

² See *Iraq Times*, 31 January 1941.

Sir,—I have to lead the country towards the attainment of its ideals, following a policy consistent with the national interest.

I had no doubt that your Royal Highness was anxious to overcome the difficulties which stood in the way of those who are sincere; but foreign interests—which did not wish to see mutual confidence reigning between you and a Government which wished to serve its country sincerely in accordance with its own programme—induced your Royal Highness to express dissatisfaction with its activities.

This was shown by your action in leaving the Royal Court and remaining in the Palace, a fact which adversely affected the Cabinet's freedom of action.

Your Royal Highness's dissatisfaction was again demonstrated by your departure from the capital and by suspending your approval of various *iradahs* submitted to you, especially those dealing with the dissolution of the Majlis. I had taken the responsibility for administration during these critical times, having found it necessary to appeal to the country in order to obtain the people's views on its policy, to ensure the closer co-operation between the Executive and the Legislature which is necessary in the present world situation.

In view of the above, I beg to be relieved of the responsibility of continuing in office and I request your Royal Highness to accept my resignation.

Rashid Ali al-Gaylani

The Regent accepted the resignation on the same day, but in his reply to Rashid Ali declared that the crisis which had taken place was 'undesirable from all quarters'. He invited President Sadr and other prominent politicians to consult him at Diwaniyah before the new Cabinet should be formed. The Four Colonels, who were afraid of their fate, at once prevailed upon Amin Zaki, Acting Chief of the General Staff, to see President Sadr before he left Baghdad and to advise him that the new Cabinet should be formed by General Taha al-Hashimi. To confirm the truth of this, President Sadr got in touch with the Four Colonels who, as he pointed out to the writer, threatened in the most violent terms to revolt if the Premiership were not entrusted to General Taha, the only politician in whom they had any confidence. General Taha, who believed in the sincerity and genuine patriotism of the Four Colonels, was of the opinion that he could effect reconciliation between them and the Regent and was, therefore, from the point of view of the army, the only possible candidate for the Premiership after the fall of Rashid Ali.

At Diwaniyah President Sadr candidly described the situation to the Regent and pointed out to him that he had to choose either to meet the demand of the Four Colonels and invite General Taha to

form the new Cabinet, or to remain at Diwaniyah, entrusting the Premiership to whomsoever he wanted, and oppose the Four Colonels, even if the situation led to civil war.¹ The Regent, it seems, was disposed to accept the challenge of civil war had General Rawi come boldly to his support. General Rawi apologetically pointed out to the writer that while his sympathies were with the Regent, he could not, as a loyal soldier, support civil war; he was responsible only to his immediate superior, the Chief of the General Staff, and his support of the Regent would be regarded as raising a rebellion against the General Staff. Met with the coolness and hesitancy of General Rawi, the Regent, on second thoughts, decided to invite General Taha to form the new Cabinet.² This, of course, merely postponed the clash with the army. General Taha, now elevated to power by the Four in order to shield them from the Regent, earnestly believed in the possibility of reconciling the army with the Regent. But such a delicate task needed not the General, who had no patience with negotiations, but a diplomat skilled enough to accomplish almost the impossible. The Four, it will be remembered, were not prepared to side-step power; while the Regent was waiting for the opportune moment to break them.

THE TAHĀ AL-HASHIMI CABINET

General Taha agreed to form the new Cabinet (1 February 1941) on the understanding that since he knew the Four Colonels very well, and since the Four had confidence in his good will towards them, the situation would return to normal. Taha was of the opinion that the Four Colonels were ready to submit obediently to the Regent and to remain loyal to him, if the latter promised to pardon them. The Four were, however, very fearful that the Regent, once he had re-established his authority, would try either to transfer them or to place them on the retired list. Taha, it seems, had too much confidence in the honour of the Four and honestly tried to effect a permanent understanding between them and the Regent. In an interview with the writer, Taha declared that he was anxious for reconciliation lest suspicion between the Regent and the Four should be exploited by certain ambitious politicians using the Four as tools in order to achieve power. He accordingly urged the Regent to treat the Four benevolently.

¹ It was understood, Sadr said to the writer, that had the Regent chosen the second alternative, he would have asked Sadr himself to form the new Cabinet.

² Cf. the Regent's speech, p. 13.

General Taha, as might have been expected, could not control the Four Colonels. Suspicion was the governing factor. Rashid Ali, Yunis as-Sab'awi, Ali Mahmud, and other extremist politicians were restless and remained in constant touch with the Four. Rumours and foreign propaganda played a considerable part in creating an atmosphere of fear and suspicion between the military party and the Regent. General Taha, who must have known about the Four's secret activities, did not lose hope of restraining them and constantly advised them to come to an understanding with the Regent. But the civilian politicians around Rashid Ali remained active and, it seems, not only awed the Four Colonels by exaggerating the Regent's hostility to them, but also appealed to them to oppose the Regent in the interests of the country, in order to prevent an eventual drift to war on the side of Britain.

In the circumstances General Taha, who knew by this time that he could no longer restrain the Four, decided, at the instance of the Regent, to transfer one of them, Colonel Kamil Shabib, officer commanding the First Division, to Diwaniyah in place of General Rawi, officer commanding the Fourth Division, who was to take his place (26 March 1941).¹ Shabib, though the weakest of the Four, was infuriated and is said to have torn the order in two. The Four Colonels sent a protest to the Prime Minister and prevailed on him to keep Shabib in his position. But this move brought matters to a head, because it gave direct evidence that the Regent had decided to break up the military party. General Taha, it seems, saw the futility of the transfer and, in order to keep his relations with the Four friendly, sought to avoid forcing them to rebel. He therefore promised them that he would ignore the order of transfer but extracted from them a promise that they would no longer interfere in politics. The Regent, however, did not think that it was in the interests of the country to retract, which evidently meant withdrawal of the royal decree under the threat and personal influence of the Four.² The transfer was not, however, carried out.

On 31 March 1941 the parliamentary session was due to come to an end. The Regent insisted that before Parliament dissolved he should

¹ It was also contemplated, had such an arrangement proved workable, to transfer Colonel Salah ad-Din as-Sabbagh, Officer Commanding the Third Division, to Ba'qubah (on the northern outskirts of Baghdad). See text of the judgement and sentences of the court martial on Rashid Ali and his group in *al-Akhbar*, 5 May 1942. Cf. the Regent's speech, p. 14.

² The Regent's speech, p. 14.

discuss the situation with the Cabinet lest the Four should take advantage of the parliamentary recess to put pressure on him again. However, the Prime Minister, at the meeting of the Council of Ministers presided over by the Regent, made a statement to the effect that the Four Colonels had pledged their military honour that they would no longer interfere in politics.¹

When Parliament was prorogued on the same day (31 March) Rashid Ali and his group must have felt relieved, since they believed that the only opposition to their move had come from Parliament. From that day the group increased their activities and began again to try to persuade the Four to overthrow the Taha al-Hashimi Cabinet. Rashid Ali and Yunis as-Sab'awi, it seems, were able to induce the Four to believe that General Taha had betrayed them by agreeing with the Regent's proposal to transfer one of them. They also suggested to the Four that if Rashid Ali's group were in power, their pan-Arab ideas would be put into practice and their personal prestige would probably be enhanced.

THE SIXTH AND SEVENTH COUPS D'ÉTAT

On 1 April 1941, in the evening, a meeting was held at Rashid Camp attended by Rashid Ali, Colonels Salah ad-Din, Fahmi Sa'id, Mahmud Salman, and General Amin Zaki, Acting Chief of the General Staff. It was decided to place the army on the alert and to raise a rebellion if General Taha's Cabinet refused to resign. Amin Zaki and Fahmi Sa'id were chosen to deliver the ultimatum to General Taha. The two heralds reached the General's home an hour before midnight and broke to him the grave news of the army's new move. General Taha tried to dissuade them from embarking on a new and dangerous step which would create another crisis; but the messengers stated that the army no longer had faith in the Regent, who had entirely fallen under foreign influence, and who had developed an uncompromising hatred of the Four Colonels. They advised General Taha to discuss the situation with Rashid Ali, in whom the army had full confidence, and to co-operate with him in the formation of the new Cabinet. They told him, likewise, that the army had actually surrounded the Regent's palace in order to prevent him from escaping. General Taha replied that there was absolutely no need for going so far and that he was not prepared to co-operate with Rashid Ali. Having failed to win over General Taha,

¹ The Regent's speech, p. 15.

the messengers asked for his resignation; and, under threat, the general had no choice but to write a letter of resignation. The letter was hurriedly carried to Rashid Ali, who saw now that the door to power had again been thrown open to him. By this time the army had already marched to the capital and had taken virtual control of key positions around it.

Rashid Ali, General Zaki, the Four Colonels, and Ali Mahmud held another meeting at Rashid Camp on the morning of 2 April 1941. They decided to send another deputation to General Taha to try again to persuade him to join their movement. Rashid Ali, General Zaki, and Colonel Salah ad-Din proceeded to General Taha's house, where, to their surprise, they found General Taha's Cabinet holding a meeting. Rashid Ali discussed the situation with Taha and his colleagues and pointed out that the army no longer had confidence in the Regent. Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, Foreign Minister, pointed out that the position of Rashid Ali, which depended on armed force, was unconstitutional and that disastrous consequences might ensue. Rashid Ali said that the Regent had again escaped and that a solution of the new crisis would have to be found. The meeting, it seems, broke up without final agreement.

In the evening (2 April 1941) it was realized by Rashid Ali and the army officers that they would have to proceed with their intended coup d'état and assume power, since there was no possibility of matters returning to normal. The Regent had escaped and was determined not to yield. The group was also determined not to give in, as they had done when the Regent escaped to Diwaniyah, and if necessary, to depose the Regent.

IX

THE CLIMAX APRIL-MAY 1941

INTELLIGENCE had reached the Regent on the night of 1 April 1941 that his palace was surrounded by the army. Disguised and unnoticed he was able to escape to his aunt's house where he passed the night in considerable anxiety. The next morning, again disguised, he crossed the Tigris in a motor-boat and escaped to Basrah.¹ He tried to organize a resistance movement but failed, for Rashid Ali had issued orders to the Army Command in the south to arrest him. Aware of his insecure position, the Regent immediately left Basrah for a British gunboat in the Shatt al-Arab, and then went to Transjordan. General Nuri, Midfa'i, and Ali Jawdat, who had been able to escape being arrested by Rashid Ali, joined him shortly afterwards; but Salih Jabr, then Mutassarif of Basrah, who took an active part in supporting the Regent, was first brought under arrest to Baghdad and was dismissed from office. He was later released and left for Persia.

Outmanœuvred by the Regent's escape Rashid Ali, with the full backing of the army, proceeded to depose the Regent and to establish a new regime. The army officers, who had taken full control of the country, formed a temporary military Government, known as the Government of National Defence, and entrusted its leadership to Rashid Ali. General Amin Zaki, Acting Chief of the General Staff, though he lacked courage and enthusiasm, became completely under the influence of the Four Colonels. He was prevailed upon to sign a speech broadcast to the nation on 3 April 1941, giving an elaborate *apologia* for the army's new move. The text of the speech follows:²

¹ 'It was fortunate for the future of Iraq', stated the official record of the Persia and Iraq Command, 'that the American Legation were ready to act, in the interest of the lawful ruler of the country, with boldness and resource. On 2 April the Regent, with their assistance, escaped to Habbaniya; from there he was flown to Basra, where he hoped to gather the loyalists about him and form a new Cabinet' (Great Britain, Central Office of Information, *Paforce: the Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command 1941-6* (London, H.M.S.O., 1948) p. 18).

² See *Iraq Times*, 4 April 1941; Arabic text in *al-Bilad*, 4 April 1941.

The nation is aware that His Highness Amir Abd al-Ilah, the Regent, has lately been contravening the regulations of the Regency, even to the extent of not hesitating to endeavour to obtain approval of certain people for his own accession to the Throne. He failed to carry out the duties entrusted to him and tried to destroy the national army which is the guardian of the nation's unity and integrity, and which has always been known for its loyalty to the Throne and its desire to safeguard peace and order. . . .

Numerous endeavours were made to induce him to change his attitude and to respect his constitutional obligations. He was reminded repeatedly that as a Regent, under the provisions of the constitution, he was 'not responsible', but the advice was not followed.

This unhappy situation had an adverse effect on the interests of the country and the machinery of the State was slowed down. The nation's feeling of indignation against the Regent and his suite increased to such an extent that H.E. the Prime Minister, Sayyid Taha al-Hashimi, was compelled to resign to avoid a share of this responsibility.

Instead of His Highness being at his official headquarters to exercise his constitutional powers, without being affected by party or political bias, he threw aside the duties of the Regency, ignoring the rights of the nation and suspending the operation of the constitution. . . .

The nation struggled very hard to establish its independence and bore great sacrifices to ensure the stability of the country. It is not easy, therefore, for the people to allow such excesses to continue endangering the safety of the State.

In view of these circumstances the administration has been entrusted to a Government of National Defence headed by H. E. Sayyid Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, who is a firm believer in the nation's right to live a free and happy existence and in its ability to preserve its independence and national sovereignty without contravening its international obligations. His Excellency has been requested by the army to accept this heavy responsibility until the necessary constitutional measures can be taken in a peaceful atmosphere and the situation returns to normal. This decision was taken by the army; it was compelled to take it to safeguard the country's integrity and safety.

The army is fully confident of its ability to safeguard our dear country, depending on the co-operation of the army chiefs and the national leaders. We have no doubt that we shall have the sincere co-operation of the nation and the Government officials, and that the new Government of National Defence will see that the country emerges successfully from the present crisis and will restore stability to the machinery of State.

People of Iraq! It is our duty to appreciate to the full our national obligations and to co-operate in the preservation of our independence and national sovereignty. You should take no heed of the reports spread by malicious propaganda. Remember the heavy sacrifices you bore in your struggle to

establish a State which is fully aware of its international obligations and which resents being deprived of any of its rights. Remember that you are all responsible before God and the country for the defence of your country's integrity and the continuance of the happy life of the nation. . . .

Following this broadcast Rashid Ali made a short but firm statement in which he announced the programme of his Government. The text of the speech follows:¹

Dear Citizens,—You are aware that I prefer deeds to words, and for that reason I have not spoken to you by radio before. But now I am compelled to speak to you in view of the important events that have taken place in the country.

An hour ago you heard the proclamation by the Chief of the General Staff. You now appreciate the reasons which caused the army to accept responsibility for the preservation of peace and order in the country and for safeguarding the constitution from any excesses. This responsibility has now been handed over to me.

Since I have always devoted myself to the service of the country, I found it my duty, at a critical moment, to accept this responsibility, after the resignation of H. E. Sayyid Taha al-Hashimi from the Premiership and his failure to carry out the duties of the Premiership. At the same time His Highness the Regent failed to carry out the duties of the Regency, thereby disregarding the constitution and exposing the country to great dangers.

Having regard to these considerations, I have undertaken responsibility for the administration of the Government of National Defence referred to in the proclamation by the Chief of the General Staff. I have also undertaken to preserve peace and order until the situation becomes normal and respect for the constitution is secured.

The programme of this Government is similar to that of my late Cabinet, as publicly announced. Its chief points were: (1) to refrain from exposing the country to the dangers of war; (2) to fulfil our national mission; (3) to fulfil all the international obligations of this country, together with the continuance of good relations with neighbouring Arab States.

Furthermore, I announce that the new Government will uphold justice in all its dealings and will respect the rights and the liberties of citizens. . . .

I am fully confident that public opinion, which has shown its approval of my policy on various occasions, will again show its patriotism and loyalty, thereby assisting me in carrying out my difficult duties and leading the country to safety and the fulfilment of its sacred aspirations.

I appeal to all my countrymen to go on with their work and to beware of harmful intrigues. I end my speech by wishing His Majesty King Faysal II long life and happiness.

Rashid Ali's new move aroused great enthusiasm at the outset;

¹ See *Iraq Times*, 4 April 1941; Arabic text in *al-Bilad*, 4 April 1941.

thousands of telegrams flooded his office and a number of adventurous young men went in person to Baghdad and volunteered for service. National organizations such as the Muthanna Club and the Futuwwah formally declared their support for the movement.¹ The discontented intelligentsia, including the young nationalistic teachers and their students, were probably the most enthusiastic supporters. While such enthusiasm reflected a certain amount of genuine patriotism, a good deal was probably stimulated by extremists or adventurers in hope of immediate returns.

Following the formation of the National Defence Government Rashid Ali, though fully supported by the army and public opinion, began to make preparations to summon Parliament in order to legalize his action. The convocation of Parliament, however, required the proper legal formality, a decree by the Regent, which it was not possible to obtain. This technical hitch (which after the fall of Rashid Ali was regarded as the basis for declaring his regime illegal) was overlooked at the time, and Parliament was summoned by Sayyid Hasan Haydar, second Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies, since the President and first Vice-President declined to do so.² Ninety-four out of a hundred and eight members attended, including those who were ardent supporters of the Regent; but it was obvious that the opposition members had no longer the power or the courage to take a stand against Rashid Ali.³

Parliament met on 10 April and elected Alwan al-Yasiri, an old tribal shaykh who had distinguished himself in the Iraq revolt of 1920, as a temporary President. Rashid Ali, head of the National Defence Government, addressed the joint session of Parliament and reviewed the internal development which led up to the coup d'état. He pointed out that the crisis had arisen when the Regent had fled and General Taha, the Prime Minister, had resigned. Thereupon it was deemed necessary to establish a Government of National Defence for the safety of the country. In appealing to Parliament to restore the situation to normal, Rashid Ali moved to depose Amir Abd al-Ilah and to appoint Sharif Sharaf, a distant relative of the King, as the new Regent. There was little speech-making for it was obvious that in the

¹ The Muthanna Club issued a statement to this effect on 10 April 1941 (see *al-Bilad*, 11 April 1941).

² Sayyid Hasan Haydar, after the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime, declared in Parliament on 17 November 1941 that he had called Parliament under pressure of the army (*Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1941, pp. 44-6).

³ *ibid.* p. 25. See also *Proceedings of the Senate*, 16th Session, 1941, pp. 13-14.

circumstances no one could have openly opposed these proposals. Naji as-Suwaydi, however, who was expected to be with the opposition, made an unexpected speech in support of Rashid Ali. He perhaps saw the hopelessness of the Regent's cause after he had left the country, and sought to resolve the crisis by advising Parliament to approve Rashid Ali's action. Suwaydi, however, in giving his whole-hearted support insisted that Rashid Ali should pledge Parliament and the nation to respect the constitution and never again to contravene its provisions. Rashid Ali, with a proper show of public spirit, solemnly declared that he would respect the constitution. The President, Shaykh Yasiri, put Rashid Ali's motion to the vote and it was approved unanimously. The new Regent was then called on to take an oath before Parliament, and the meeting came to an end.¹

Sharif Sharaf, the new Regent, proceeded immediately afterwards to the royal palace where he received a host of visitors offering their congratulations. He approved General Taha's resignation as Prime Minister, signed on 1 April 1941, and invited Rashid Ali to form a new Cabinet. It was thus that the Government of National Defence came to an end and the situation was then deemed to have returned to 'normal'.

Rashid Ali spared no time in completing the formation of this Cabinet. He assumed the portfolio of Interior in addition to the Premiership, and offered the portfolios of Finance and Defence to Naji as-Suwaydi and Naji Shawkat. Ali Mahmud and Yunis as-Sab'awi, the two enthusiastic supporters of Rashid Ali, were given the portfolios of Justice and Economics. Foreign Affairs was given to Musa ash-Shabandar, a senior official in that office and an outspoken supporter of Rashid Ali. Education was given to Dr Hasan as-Salman, an active member of the Muthanna Club. When officially invested with the seals of office, Rashid Ali made a speech in which he expressed his great satisfaction with the enthusiasm and support of the nation and promised to realize its national aspirations. He appealed to the Government officials to co-operate in carrying out his programme and applying the law of the land with efficiency and justice. He concluded that a new chapter in the history of the country had just been opened, which he hoped would be characterized by vitality, efficiency, and sense of responsibility.²

¹ For the verbatim minutes of the meeting, see *al-Istiqlal*, 11 April 1941; and *al-Bilad*, 11 April 1941.

² For text of the speech, see *al-Bilad*, 13 April 1941, pp. 1, 4.

BRITISH REACTION TO RASHID ALI'S RETURN TO POWER

On coming into power Rashid Ali spared no time in making public the intention of his Government to respect Iraq's international obligations.¹ On 29 April 1941 Musa ash-Shabandar, Rashid Ali's Foreign Minister, made a statement on the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty to a representative of the French news agency Ofi, which was broadcast on the same day by the Ankara Radio, in which he said:²

The Government of H. E. Sayyid Rashid Ali al-Gaylani had done, and was still doing, its utmost to establish friendly relations with all States. The policy of the Government was based on its endeavour to keep Iraq out of the war and on the fulfilment of the provisions of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty in letter and spirit.

In London the reaction to Rashid Ali's return to power was naturally unfavourable. In answer to a question raised in the House of Commons on 9 April, Mr Attlee stated the position of the British Government as follows:³

On every occasion that the Iraqi Army has interfered in the life of the country, His Majesty's Government have not failed to notice the unfortunate results produced. They therefore regret the circumstances leading up to the present situation in Iraq, which they regard as entirely unconstitutional. The rights and obligations of His Majesty's Government under the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance are, of course, unaffected by recent developments, and they are determined to ensure that the treaty is fully observed.

Britain's hostile attitude towards Rashid Ali was manifested by her refusal to recognize his new regime. Sir Kinahan Cornwallis,⁴ the new British Ambassador who arrived on the eve of the coup d'état, would not present his letters of credentials to the new Regent lest this action would constitute recognition. This unfriendly action not only widened the gulf between Britain and Iraq, but was also indicative of hostility between Sir Kinahan and Rashid Ali. Sir Kinahan, before he left Iraq in 1935, was for a long period an adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior; but the coming of the *Ikha* Party into power in 1934, with Rashid Ali as Minister of Interior, resulted in the termination of his service. In 1941, when the strained relations between Britain and Iraq were in need of sympathetic negotiators, it was unfortunate

¹ See *al-Iraq*, 22 April 1941.

² *Iraq Times*, 30 April 1941.

³ *Hansard* (Commons), 5th series, vol. 370, col. 1562.

⁴ Sir Kinahan Cornwallis served in Iraq as Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior from 1921 to 1935.

that two who were so unsympathetic to each other had the task of trying to patch up the mounting differences between the two countries.

Rashid Ali was outwardly conciliatory to Sir Kinahan since he was anxious for Great Britain to recognize his Government. When British forces arrived at Basrah on 17–18 April 1941, he gave prompt permission for their landing to demonstrate the friendly attitude of his Government towards Britain.¹ Permission for landing the British forces was requested by the British Embassy on 19 April, two days after the actual landing, and Rashid Ali, replying favourably on the same day, granted permission, but made the following proposals:²

1. Measures should be taken to move the forces as soon as possible from Basrah to Rutbah.
2. The Iraqi Government be given adequate prior notification of the arrival of forces.
3. The number of troops to be landed should not exceed, during their movement until they crossed the Iraqi frontiers, one mixed regiment.
4. The Iraqi Government would not permit any further landing of forces until those which had already landed in Basrah had crossed the Iraqi frontiers.

While there was relief on the part of the British authorities after the landing of forces, British recognition of Rashid Ali's Government was not granted. Arrangements were made for Sir Kinahan and Rashid Ali to meet (26 April), but no agreement resulted. This prompted Rashid Ali to send a stiff note to the British Embassy on 27 April complaining that the British forces that landed at Basrah had not yet been moved. The note added that the presence of British forces on Iraqi territory had caused the spread of unfavourable rumours which might disturb the existing friendly relations between Iraq and Britain.³

On the following day (28 April), the Counsellor of the British Embassy paid a visit to the Iraqi Foreign Office and requested permission for the further landing of troops, not exceeding 3,500

¹ On 22 April the Baghdad daily papers observed of Rashid Ali's permission for the landing of British forces that it was sincere evidence of his intention to observe Iraq's international obligations (*Iraq Times*, 22 April 1941). This was also reiterated by Musa ash-Shabandar, Rashid Ali's Foreign Minister, in his statement on 29 April (*Iraq Times*, 30 April 1941).

² The White Book, pp. 22–3.

³ *ibid.* p. 23.

in number, which, he said, would arrive on 29 April. The Iraqi Foreign Office replied that the attitude of the Iraqi Government was the same as that stated in its note of 19 April, namely, that permission would be granted only after the forces already in the country had crossed the Iraqi frontiers.¹ This unfavourable reply prompted Sir Kinahan Cornwallis to see Rashid Ali at the Foreign Office, in the presence of the Foreign Minister, on the same day. Sir Kinahan represented to Rashid Ali that the Iraqi Government was restricting British rights by preventing the landing of British forces which were to safeguard imperial communications. Rashid Ali replied that it was not his Government's intention to restrict British rights under the Treaty of Alliance, but that imperial communications in Iraq were to be safeguarded by the Iraqi Government itself. Sir Kinahan requested permission for the disembarkation of the additional forces. Rashid Ali replied that permission for disembarkation would depend on moving away the forces that were already in the country. Sir Kinahan then inquired what would happen if these forces were to land in Basrah. Rashid Ali commented that the consequences of violating the treaty would rest with the British Government.²

The British forces had actually landed in Basrah on 29 April. This prompted Rashid Ali to send a letter of protest on 30 April in which it was stated that the landing of the forces was contrary to the terms of the treaty. At this juncture, it seems, both sides had realized that there was no possibility of coming to an understanding. Rashid Ali, with the full support of the army, began to make preparations for war; while the British authorities, trying to gain time until sufficient forces had reached Iraq, were determined to oust Rashid Ali and the Four Colonels from their positions.

In analysing the diplomatic controversy over the application of the Treaty of Alliance, it is to be noted that the four conditions laid down by Rashid Ali, with the possible exception of the second, were restrictive provisions intended to exercise pressure on the British Government for political purposes. While any interpretation of a vague provision of a treaty is permissible, agreement on the application of a specific provision should have been reached between the parties concerned before the case arose.³ Sir Kinahan Cornwallis

¹ *ibid.* p. 24.

² *ibid.* pp. 13-16.

³ 'If the meaning of a stipulation is ambiguous', says Oppenheim, 'and one of the contracting parties, at a time before a case arises for the application of the stipulation, makes known what meaning it attributes to it, the other party or parties cannot when a case for its application does occur, insist upon a different

was probably right when he pointed out to Rashid Ali on 28 April that British rights (as stated in a general way in the Treaty of Alliance) were unlimited as to the facilities given for safeguarding British imperial communications in Iraq. For Article 4 of the treaty provided that 'the aid of His Majesty the King of Iraq in the event of war or the imminent menace of war will consist in furnishing to His Britannic Majesty on Iraq territory all facilities and assistance in his power including the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes, and means of communication'.¹

The second condition, which stipulated that the British Government should give adequate prior notification of the arrival of forces, was quite valid, since the last sentence of Annexure 7 stated that such notification was required. It was rather too late when, on 18 April 1941, the British Embassy notified the Iraqi Government of the arrival of forces which had actually landed on 17-18 April.

It is to be noted that neither of the two contracting parties had invoked Article 10 of the treaty which stipulated that 'should any difference arise relative to the application or the interpretation of this Treaty, and should the High Contracting Parties fail to settle such differences by direct negotiation, then it shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations'. Under Article 13 of the League Covenant, the dispute might have been dealt with by arbitration or judicial settlement. Since the war made it obviously impossible to refer the dispute to the Permanent Court of International Justice, the dispute might have been dealt with by other legal procedures. It was thus that, while the machinery for settling any dispute arising from the interpretation or application of the treaty was specifically laid down in that treaty, only direct negotiation was actually used. Neither arbitration, nor judicial settlement, nor any other legal procedure was exhausted before resort was had to war.

THE THIRTY DAYS' WAR

The 29th April, when Rashid Ali sent the note of protest to the British Embassy, marked the beginning of a change for the worse in Anglo-Iraqi relations. Both sides began to take precautionary measures in anticipation of a forthcoming conflict. On 29 April the

meaning.' (L. Oppenheim, *International Law*, ed. by H. Lauterpacht, 5th ed. (London, 1937) vol. 1, pp. 754-5.)

¹ *Documents on International Affairs 1930* (London, Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1931).

Iraqi Army High Command, under the full control of the Four Colonels, ordered the Iraqi forces stationed at Rashid Camp, seven miles south of Baghdad, to move to Habbaniyah.¹ These forces were seen on the plateau overlooking Habbaniyah, the British air base west of Euphrates, the next day. The British Embassy protested against this action, but the Iraqi Government replied that the forces were sent merely as a 'precautionary measure'. In the meantime the British Embassy issued a notice directing British and American women and children to leave Baghdad, while British and American men were asked to assemble at the British Embassy or the American Legation.²

The Iraqi Command in charge of the forces near Habbaniyah sent a message to the British forces on 1 May 1941, stating that all flying at Habbaniyah was to cease and any aircraft ignoring such orders would be fired on. This order was rejected with a firm reply that air training would continue and that reprisals would follow any action taken against British aircraft. Another note was sent to the Iraqi forces asking them to withdraw from the plateau by next morning and stating that failure to do so would constitute an act of war. 'That evening', reported Philip Guedalla, 'a meeting at Headquarters decided that, if they were still there at dawn, they should be attacked by every aircraft that could get off the ground. For the camp could not be left exposed to the Iraqi guns, and this menace must be dissipated at all costs.'³ The British forces at Habbaniyah were hardly 2,500 men with 64 aircraft, 18 armoured cars, 2 howitzers and a few trench mortars and machine-guns. Of the men stationed there, there were only 35 pilots, for the air base was then used as a flying training school and was regarded as 'immune' from any attack.⁴

Since the Iraqi army did not withdraw from the plateau the next morning (2 May), the British forces at Habbaniyah started punctually at 5 a.m. to bomb them. The Iraqi army replied with anti-aircraft guns and began to shell Habbaniyah. Fighting continued all day.

¹ The Iraqi forces were made up of an infantry brigade, a mechanized artillery brigade, twelve armoured cars, one mechanized machine-gun company, and a number of tanks. See *Paiforce*, p. 21.

² A party of 150 British and American women and children were taken to Habbaniyah on 29 April to be flown the next day to Basrah. It was estimated that 500 British and American subjects assembled at the British Embassy and the American Legation; 358 of them went to the British Embassy. (*Iraq Times*, 9 June 1941; *The Times*, 30 June 1941, p. 5.)

³ Philip Guedalla, *Middle East, 1940-1942* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1944) p. 140. ⁴ *ibid.* pp. 139, 140.

'Their real danger', says Guedalla, 'came from shelling. The bombardment, which might so easily have been conclusive, seemed to lack direction. No German hand was there to guide.'¹ The British forces were harassed at Habbaniyah for three days until a few aircraft and armoured cars were rushed from Basrah and the Western Desert to help lift the siege. On 5 May the British forces took the initiative. The Iraqi forces, lacking air power, suffered greatly from bombing and had to retreat to Fallujah. On 6 May the British forces, supported by the Assyrian levies, launched an attack on Fallujah. Fallujah changed hands, but the main problem was then to clear the way to Baghdad which was flooded, and transportation became increasingly difficult.²

When fighting began on 2 May, the Rashid Ali Government sent a polite but firm note to the British Embassy recapitulating the whole controversy over the application of the treaty. The note called the attention of the British Embassy to its responsibility for the attack on the Iraqi forces and asked that the dispute be referred to London for reconsideration. Rashid Ali, it seems, was alarmed since the dispute with Britain had developed into armed conflict; but the Four Colonels and certain influential groups, encouraged by British reverses in Greece, North Africa, and Crete, thought that the time had come to give the final blow to British influence in Iraq. They were counting on immediate German help, but could not foresee that their resistance might be broken before German support had arrived.

Rashid Ali broke the news of the conflict with Britain in an official statement on the evening of 2 May, declaring that the British forces, despite all efforts made to avoid fighting, had attacked the Iraqi garrison in the neighbourhood of Habbaniyah.

We were forced [stated the official announcement] to take defensive measures and the military operations which had begun are continuing with success to our army. The noble Iraqi nation is requested to remain quiet, proving its political maturity and confidence in the national forces. The people are requested never to attack any foreigners amongst us who will be regarded as our guests.³

There was no formal declaration of war on either side, though a *Jihad* (holy war) was proclaimed by the Muslim religious divines.⁴

¹ Guedalla, op. cit. p. 143.

² For a brief account of the campaign, see *Paisforce*, pp. 24-31.

³ See text in *al-Bilad*, 3 May 1941.

⁴ *Fatawa al-mujahidin al-'alam wa al-'a'imma hal-'alam* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1941).

TURKEY'S MEDIATION

Hostilities between Iraq and Great Britain aroused grave concern in certain neighbouring countries, especially Turkey, lest Iraq would become an outpost of German influence. The war in Iraq might have prevented Turkey from receiving valuable materials shipped from Britain via the Persian Gulf; while the extension of German influence to Iraq would bring the danger of war nearer to Saudi Arabia and threaten Egypt, which was then under Axis attack from the Western Desert, by another threat from the east of Suez.

On 4 May 1941 Turkey offered her good offices in order to bring the war to an end. Great Britain replied favourably but, as Mr Eden stated in the House of Commons on 6 May:

The first requisite is the withdrawal of troops from Habbaniyah and the cessation of hostilities against His Majesty's Forces in Iraq. When this has been done and fighting between Allied nations has in consequence ceased, His Majesty's Government are prepared to discuss the fulfilment of their Treaty rights, which His Majesty's Government must make it plain that they are in all circumstances determined to maintain.¹

The Iraqi Government decided to send Naji Shawkat, Minister of Defence, to discuss the terms of mediation with the Turkish Government. Shawkat arrived in Ankara on 8 May and declared that his mission was to obtain the advice of the Turkish Government on the dispute with Britain. He had three long conversations with Sarajoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister, in which Iraq accepted mediation on condition that Britain would recognize the new regime in Iraq in return for Iraq's fulfilment of her treaty obligations. But no agreement was reached and Shawkat, who was suspected of being less interested in discussing mediation than in making contact with Germany, obviously became mainly concerned to negotiate with von Papen.²

Egypt and Saudi-Arabia, as neighbouring Arab countries, advised Rashid Ali to reconcile his differences with Britain. Naji as-Suwaydi, Minister of Finance, was sent to negotiate with Ibn Sa'ud for help; but the latter replied that 'the only course open to the Arab nations was to support Great Britain'.³ Neither Turkish nor Arab good offices helped

¹ *Hansard* (Commons), 5th series, vol. 371, col. 737.

² Cf. *The Times*, 12 May 1941, p. 4. Naji Shawkat stated (by correspondence through a friend) that he contacted von Papen after his failure to come to agreement with Britain.

³ *The Times*, 19 May 1941, p. 3. See the account of Shaykh Hafiz Wahba, Saudi Minister to Great Britain, of Suwaydi's conversations with King Ibn Sa'ud in K. S. Twitchell, *Saudi Arabia* (Princeton, 1947) pp. 106-7.

to bring an understanding between Rashid Ali and Britain; Rashid Ali, accordingly, was bound to look for Axis support to prosecute the war against Britain, to the delight and great satisfaction of his extremists.

Recognition by the Axis Powers was not formally granted to Rashid Ali, but the Italian and Japanese ministers in Baghdad declared that their Governments were prepared to extend formal recognition. Soviet Russia, which was anxious to establish diplomatic relations with the Arab countries, had chosen this opportune moment to extend recognition to the Rashid Ali regime. This was announced by the Tass news agency on 12 May 1941. Tass stated that the initiative was taken by the Iraqi Government at the end of 1940 (Rashid Ali himself was then Prime Minister); but in making the offer the Iraqi Government had suggested that the Soviet Union should at the same time issue a declaration recognizing the independence of the other Arab countries. Nothing further happened until 12 May 1941. On that day, says Tass, the Iraqi Government again proposed diplomatic relations, but this time without conditions. The Soviet Union responded favourably.¹

Rashid Ali's action was prompted by his urgent need to get support for his regime from any foreign Power. But the Soviet response, which was satisfactory to the Axis Powers, was dictated by her willingness to establish relations with any Arab country rather than to please the Axis dictators.²

AXIS SUPPORT FOR RASHID ALI

Failing to come to an understanding with Britain, Rashid Ali gave his extremists permission to agitate against her in the press and the radio in the most extreme terms.³ The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni, who had been in Iraq since October 1939 and preferred, during his stay in Baghdad, to influence the course of events from behind the scene, suddenly emerged to arouse public opinion throughout the Muslim world against Britain. In a speech broadcast on 9 May 1941, he declared a *Jihad* (holy war) against Great Britain and invited every able-bodied Muslim to take part in the war against 'the greatest foe of Islam'.⁴

¹ *The Times*, 13 May 1941, p. 3.

² Cf. Bruce Hopper, 'The War for Eastern Europe', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 20 (October 1941) p. 23.

³ See *al-Bilad*, 3, 5, and 16 May 1941; *al-Istiqlal*, 5 and 25 May 1941.

⁴ For text of his speech, see *al-Istiqlal*, 9 May 1941; *al-Liwa'*, 9 May 1941. For a translation of the speech, see *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 31 (1941) pp. 552-3.

The German and Italian radio stations, which had long been successfully arousing Arab opinion against England, declared that Rashid Ali had raised the standard of freedom against British imperialism and promised immediate Axis support for Iraq. The profuse Axis propaganda in support of Rashid Ali gave, it seems, the impression that he had had a prior understanding with Germany before raising a revolt against Britain. Rashid Ali was accordingly labelled by the British press as an Oriental quisling.¹

While it is true that Axis agents had long since been active in the Middle East, it appears that neither Rashid Ali nor the Four Colonels had a prior understanding with the Axis Powers to raise a revolt against Great Britain. It was not until Naji Shawkat, Rashid Ali's Minister of Defence, was sent to discuss mediation with Turkey, that Rashid Ali gave instructions to Shawkat, should the understanding with England fail, to ask von Papen, the German Minister to Turkey, for German military help. When Naji Shawkat arrived in Ankara von Papen was not in Turkey, but he returned, after seeing the Führer at Salzburg on his way to Turkey, on 13 May. Von Papen, it is reported, intimated to Shawkat that the Iraqi revolt was premature and that Germany was too busy elsewhere, especially in Crete, to send substantial help to Iraq.² The fact that Hitler was preparing an onslaught against the Soviet Union rather than contemplating a drive in the Middle East sealed the failure of the Rashid Ali revolt. Naji Shawkat realized von Papen's lack of enthusiasm, and returned to Baghdad on 18 May. His report to Rashid Ali was not encouraging and he advised an understanding with Britain; but the Four Colonels, denouncing Shawkat as a traitor, insisted on carrying on the war against Great Britain to the end. Disgusted with the group of army officers, Naji Shawkat, though old and worn out from his recent trip, decided to disassociate himself from the cause for which he had worked so assiduously.

Though the Rashid Ali revolt was regarded by the Axis Powers as 'premature', they did not lose sight of its importance in the general war against Britain. When von Papen saw Hitler at Salzburg, he was instructed to 'endeavour to obtain from the Turks permission for the secret passage of arms for Iraq through Turkish territory'.³ Furthermore, Hitler gave instructions to Otto Abetz, his representative in

¹ *The Times*, 19 May 1941, p. 3. ² Information supplied by Naji Shawkat.

³ U.S. Government, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1946) vol. 4, p. 501.

Paris, to influence Admiral Darlan, Vice-Premier, to send military help to Iraq from Syria. France, it seems, was then being pressed for further German collaboration. Admiral Darlan, whose position had become insecure owing to Laval's intrigues, was invited to Paris to confer with Abetz on 3 May and showed willingness to promise full collaboration.¹ He promised to release war materials from Syria to Iraq and to offer help to General Rommel in North Africa. These preliminary promises were reported to Hitler, and Darlan was subsequently invited to Berchtesgaden to see Hitler on 11–12 May. At Berchtesgaden a larger scheme of collaboration was discussed in which France was asked to give active help to Germany in the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe in exchange for the support of France and her colonial empire. Pétain, it seems, approved Darlan's promises to Hitler, for he stated in his broadcast to the nation on 15 May, after Darlan's return to Vichy: 'I had approved this [Darlan's] meeting in principle.'²

The arrangements for collaboration were finally put on record in the form of an agreement signed between Abetz and Darlan on 27 May 1941. The agreement consisted of three parts: the first concerning Syria and Iraq; the second concerning North Africa; and the third concerning West and Equatorial Africa. The first, which provided help to Iraq, is of particular interest and deserves to be quoted in full:³

Le Gouvernement Français s'engage à donner satisfaction aux désirs suivants du Haut Commandement Allemand:

- (a) Accord de principe sur la cession à l'Irak, contre paiement, du matériel de guerre stocké en Syrie, jusqu'à concurrence des 3/4 de l'ensemble dudit matériel, ainsi qu'il a été fixé antérieurement. Exception est faite en vertu d'accords particuliers, pour les armes nécessaires à la défense immédiate de la Syrie.
- (b) Pendant la durée de l'état de choses actuel en Irak, escale et ravitaillement dans la mesure du possible, des avions allemands et italiens avec octroi à l'Armée de l'Air allemande d'un point d'appui dans le Nord de la Syrie (Alep).
- (c) Utilisation de ports, routes et voies ferrées syriens pour livraison à destination de l'Irak.
- (d) Sur instructions précises à donner par le Haut Commissaire Français, instruction donnée en Syrie, à des soldats irakiens, en ce qui concerne le maniement des armes françaises cédées.
- (e) Transmission au Haut Commandement Allemand (à charge de récipro-

¹ William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York, Knopf, 1947) p. 148.

² Quoted by Langer, op. cit. p. 151.

³ *ibid.* p. 402.

cité) de tous renseignements recueillis par le commandement français sur les forces et sur les mesures de guerre anglaise dans le Proche-Orient.

At a meeting held in Rome on 13 May 1941 between von Ribbentrop and Mussolini, in the presence of Count Ciano, the situation in Iraq, among other things, was discussed. Von Ribbentrop reported to Mussolini that:¹

Darlan had agreed to deliver to Iraq certain quantities of arms of war materials out of the stocks stored in Syria under Italian control. Part of these arms would, no doubt, already be on their way to Iraq.... Darlan had, furthermore, put landing places for German aircraft and stocks of petrol at their disposal. . . . Should a large-scale transport of arms reach Iraq it would be possible to move airborne troops into the regions, who could then advance against the British with material found there and who could, under certain circumstances, attack Egypt from the East from Iraq.

Mussolini, whose vain ambition it was to control the eastern Mediterranean, showed great interest in the Rashid Ali revolt and urged immediate help. He stated his own views on the situation as follows:²

(1) One must definitely help Iraq, as a new front against the British would be created in this way and the indignation, not only of the Arabs, but also of the great number of Moslems would be aroused. Already the Grand Mufti had summoned the Arabs of the world to a holy war against England. . . .

(2) It would be necessary to get possession of Crete and Cyprus (the 'anteroom' of Syria). If one could then obtain, from the French, permission to land troops and planes in Syria, the Axis powers help to Iraq could be very substantial. The Italians had already prepared five planes, which would proceed to Baghdad via Rhodes, in order to transport their 400 machine-guns, as well as 20 anti-tank guns. In addition, 12 fighter planes were ready for action.

Should the passage of arms through Turkey prove impossible, one would have to march against England from Syria. The great advantage here lay in the 100 km. stretch of desert which had to be overcome in the event of an attack on Egypt from Syria, as compared with the 500 km. stretch of desert in the case of an attack on Egypt from the West.

When asked by von Ribbentrop how long Iraq would be able to hold out against Britain, Mussolini replied that 'the Head of the Iraq Government had declared that he could hold his own against the British, provided only he received some war material. If, however,

¹ U.S. Government, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, vol. 4, pp. 501-2.

² *ibid.* p. 502.

he received no aid, opposition would . . . be overcome by the British in 3 or 4 weeks.' Mussolini, however, wondered whether the de Gaulist movement in Syria would not put some difficulties in the way of French assistance. Von Ribbentrop replied that 'Darlan appeared convinced that he could carry out the business in Syria as planned'.

Darlan's promises of help were fulfilled by sending several train-loads of French guns and ammunition to Iraq. The French authorities in Syria, furthermore, permitted German aircraft to land, refuel, and cross Syria to Iraq. The number of German aircraft that crossed Iraq was then estimated at about thirty;¹ but in the writer's opinion, so far as he was able to ascertain, the number did not exceed twenty-three planes.

The French help from Syria was sent by rail across Turkey. The Turks, who probably had no right to interfere with the traffic, did not want to antagonize either Germany or the Iraqi Government. The British Government called the attention of Turkey to this passage of arms, but apparently Turkey acted partly from German pressure not to obstruct the Rashid Ali revolt and partly from fear that Iraq might retaliate by preventing supplies of arms sent by Britain through the Persian Gulf and Iraq.

The news of Darlan's agreement with Germany caused concern in both Great Britain and the United States. On 15 May 1941 Mr Eden, the Foreign Secretary, declared in the House of Commons that 'the French Government cannot escape responsibility for this situation'. He denounced their action 'under German orders' as 'a clear breach of the armistice terms and is inconsistent with undertakings given by the French Government'.² The French National Committee in London repudiated the action of the Vichy Government as an 'act of treason'.³ General Dentz, French High Commissioner in Syria, denied that facilities had been given to Germany in a public announcement issued in Beirut on 16 May 1941. He said:⁴ 'German aeroplanes in recent days have made forced landings on Syrian aerodromes. The French authorities, according to the terms of the Armistice, procured their most rapid departure.'

The United States Government took a more serious view of the Darlan agreement. Representations were made to Vichy through

¹ *The Times*, 17 May 1941, p. 3.

² *Hansard* (Commons), 5th series, vol. 371, col. 1264.

³ *The Times*, 17 May 1941, p. 3.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 4.

Admiral Leahy, American Ambassador to France; but Pétain denied that he knew what Darlan had accomplished. He promised 'in no event to give any voluntary active military aid to Germany'.¹ Mr Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State, was not satisfied with Pétain's assurances, and he urged President Roosevelt to take certain measures to prevent France from giving further assistance to Germany. President Roosevelt issued orders to 'the Coast Guard to take custody of the French merchantmen in American ports'.² The French Ambassador in Washington, M. Henry-Haye, protested to Mr Cordell Hull on 20 May against taking custody of the French ships; but Mr Cordell Hull replied that the recent Vichy attitude had necessitated this action, and added that 'any military aid rendered to Germany beyond the strict terms of the armistice is an attempt to slit the throat of the United States indirectly. . .'.³ M. Henry-Haye asserted that the armistice terms authorized the Germans to take control of the air bases in Syria. Mr Cordell Hull pointed out that when France undertook the Syrian mandate she signed an agreement with the United States not to permit any interference by any other country with Syria's sovereignty. He added:⁴

This obligation by France was not even raised by her at the time of the armistice. Furthermore, the retention by Germany of control over the French air bases in Syria would ordinarily contemplate control to prevent their undesirable use to the detriment of Germany. It does not mean a complete licence to Germany to transport any and all kinds of implements and supplies anywhere over Syria, which is exactly what Germany needs to establish a great base of operations against the British throughout the Middle Eastern area.

In spite of the British and American protests, the Darlan agreement with Germany was carried into effect and the Axis Powers began using Syria, though on a limited scale, for military purposes. This prompted Great Britain, in collaboration with the Free French, to put an end to German designs in the eastern Mediterranean by invading Syria and Lebanon on 8 June 1941. The Vichy Government protested to Britain and the United States, but these two Powers replied that France had not defended herself in Syria against German designs.⁴

¹ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York, Macmillan, 1948), vol. 2, p. 958. ² *ibid.* p. 960. ³ *ibid.* pp. 960-1.

⁴ For the background and events which culminated in the occupation of Syria and Lebanon, see Khadduri, 'The Franco-Lebanese Dispute and the Crisis of November 1943', *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 38 (October 1944) pp. 601 ff.

Mr Cordell Hull, in discussing the matter with M. Henry-Haye on 9 June 1941, strongly criticized the French policy of giving help to Germany in Syria. He stated:¹

A distinction must be made between the small, local aspect—the Syrian development—and the larger issue, which is that Germany must have Syria in connexion with her military operations towards Iraq and the Suez Canal. Any action by the French authorities in permitting the use of facilities in Syria for the further extension of German military operations in the Near East affects the fundamental position of the British. It is most regrettable that France cannot see the larger element in this new development, which is far more important to French interests and the future of all Frenchmen than the smaller, more immediate, and local issue of Syria. I feel that the French Government should realize that this is an issue that touches upon the very foundation of the future continuance of French life, independence, and civilization.

The Axis danger from Syria and Iraq was not removed until the British had not only eliminated Rashid Ali and the Four Colonels from Iraq, but had also occupied Syria, Lebanon, and Persia. The pro-Nazi elements continued to hope for their liberation through an eventual German victory, but prolonged war with Russia and the exhaustion of Germany after Stalingrad put an end to any possibility of this.

THE REGENT'S RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The lawful Regent, Amir Abd al-Ilah, having failed to organize a resistance movement in Basrah, left by air for Palestine and Jordan where he spent three weeks before he returned to Iraq. He was accompanied by General Nuri, Ali Jawdat, and Midfa'i. In Jerusalem he made a statement repudiating the action of Rashid Ali and declared that the 'legitimate' authority of Iraq was ready to grant Britain the rights of passage under the treaty. On 4 May 1941 he issued a proclamation to the people of Iraq in which he stated:²

A group of military tyrants, aided and abetted by Rashid Ali and other ill-disposed persons bought by foreign gold, have by force thrust me from my sacred duties as guardian of my nephew, your beloved young King. Under their evil sway the noble land of Iraq has been poisoned by falsehood and lies and brought from the blessings of peace to the horrors of a venomous war.

My duty is plain. I am returning to restore the tarnished honour of our

¹ Hull, op. cit. pp. 964-5.

² *The Times*, 5 May 1941, p. 4.

native land and to lead it back again to peaceful prosperity under a lawful and constitutional Government.

I call upon all true sons of Iraq to drive out this band of traitors and restore to our beloved country true liberty and independence. Recall your sons and brothers from this war, brought upon your heads by the lies and intrigues of foreigners thinking only of their own selfish interests. O soldiers, go peacefully to your stations and there peacefully await my restoration of an independent Iraqi constitutional Government. Long live King Faysal II.

When the tide of events turned against Rashid Ali, the Regent and his party returned to Iraq by way of the desert. They waited at Habbaniyah for a week until the Rashid Ali regime had completely collapsed. This move kept alive the hopes and aspirations of the moderate nationalists who, though they were not in favour of full collaboration with England, did not want to go to war with her.

COLLAPSE OF THE RASHID ALI REGIME

Speaking at Bloemfontein in 1943 on the turning-point in the war, General Smuts thought that if Hitler had launched his attack on Russia through Syria and Iraq, concurrently with his attack from the west, the outcome of the war would have been different. 'Who prevented this?' asked General Smuts. 'Greece! Those precious six weeks altered the history of the world. They gave us time to get hold of Syria and save Iraq from rebellion.'

The Axis Powers, it will be recalled, could only send meagre help to Rashid Ali. When the German and Italian aeroplanes finally arrived in Iraq, they could do little to prevent the weakening of resistance. One of the German aeroplanes, a Messerschmidt, unintentionally received a bad reception. The plane was shot at by mistake, and Field Marshal von Blomberg's son, who was sent to take charge of the operations in Iraq, was killed.

Axis help, meagre though it was, might have greatly improved the morale of the Iraqi army had it arrived earlier. But when the help arrived, the British forces at Habbaniyah had become stronger and reinforcements had been dispatched from the Western Desert and the Persian Gulf. The Italian aircraft, when they arrived in northern Iraq, had not even had time to go into action.¹

From 6 May, when the Iraqi forces withdrew from the plateau overlooking Habbaniyah, the British forces took the initiative. Fallujah

¹ Count Ciano complained about this slowness and commented in his diaries that this was a proof of the lack of preparations in Italy's air force. See *The Ciano Diaries, 1939-1943*, ed. by Hugh Gibson (New York, 1946) p. 359.

was taken the next day, but it changed hands later. Its final fall to the British was on 20 May, when further reinforcements had reached Habbaniyah two days before.¹

The next problem was to clear the way to Baghdad. The story of the desert army which relieved Habbaniyah has been picturesquely related by Somerset de Chair, Member of the British Parliament, who accompanied the expedition.² The army came from the Western Desert in Africa under the command of Major (now Brigadier) John Joseph Kingston, and was joined in Transjordan by the Arab Legion under the command of Brigadier Glubb Pasha.³ These desert forces arrived at Habbaniyah on 18 May and joined the local Assyrian levies (about 1,500), and a battalion of the King's Own Royal Regiment which had been flown from India.

Getting from Fallujah to Baghdad, a distance hardly thirty miles along the main road, occupied the British forces for nine days (20 to 29 May), mainly owing to the flood. Attempts were made to close the breaches in the Euphrates dykes but failed; while Glubb Pasha was toying with the idea of raising a revolt against Rashid Ali in northern Iraq.⁴ Finally, it was decided to ferry the forces across the flooded area, and the advance proceeded. Glubb Pasha made attempts to cut the railroad along the Tigris to prevent Rashid Ali from moving his headquarters to Mosul; and in one raid he captured the *Mutasarrif* (Governor) of Baghdad, Jalal Khalid, but released him.⁵

The advance to Baghdad was made from the north in order to prevent Rashid Ali's escape by way of Mosul. The British forces in the south had already taken Basrah. Thus the only way of escape still open, when the final battle at Kadhimain was taking place, was on the east to Persia. The only person who did not escape while the final battle was still going on was Yunis as-Sab'awi, Minister of Economics, who proclaimed himself the Military Governor of Baghdad. Within a few hours, however, the Kadhimain battle was over and Rashid Ali's rump Government, headed by Sab'awi, was forced to leave the capital. In the afternoon (29 May) a Committee of Internal Security was organized by the Mayor of Baghdad, Arshad al-Umari, which began to negotiate for an armistice.

¹ For the plan of the final capture of Fallujah, see *Paiforce*, pp. 27-8.

² Somerset de Chair, *The Golden Carpet* (London, Golden Cockerel Press, 1943).

³ J. B. Glubb, *The Story of the Arab Legion* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1948) Chapters XIV and XV.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 280.

⁵ *ibid.* pp. 290-1.

THE ARMISTICE

After the fall of Fallujah the Regent, Amir Abd al-Ilah, left Trans-jordan for Habbaniyah where he was met by some 200 Iraqi prisoners who enlisted as volunteers for his cause. A week before the fall of Baghdad the Regent issued the following proclamation to the Iraqi nation:¹

I promised you in a previous proclamation that I was determined to return to Iraq to rescue and liberate the country from the disastrous war in which the lives of many innocent men have been lost, and which has rendered their children orphans, besides causing heavy losses to property.

I now return to Iraq to co-operate with loyal men and the true representatives of the nation in order to restore peaceful life and heal the deep and bloody wounds caused by a tyrannical group to satisfy the wishes of the Axis Powers and in consideration of the money they received, and to drive out those who deliberately planned to make a battlefield of our country.

I trust that in the execution of this difficult task and in forming a new and better Government I shall have the assistance of every citizen of Iraq, not only of the officers of the Government and the army and the police, but also of the notables in the cities, the religious leaders, and the leaders of the tribes.

Negotiations took place between Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, the British Ambassador (who with other British subjects spent thirty days as prisoners in the Embassy) and the Committee of Internal Security. An agreement was signed on 30 May. The terms of the armistice were as follows:

1. Cessation of hostilities.
2. Maintenance of the complete independence of the country.
3. The army to be retained as formerly with its full equipment of arms and stores.
4. The units of the army to withdraw to their peace-time cantonments.
5. The lines of communication to be kept open in accordance with the terms of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty.
6. Prisoners of war to be released.
7. The armed forces of enemy States, i.e. German and Italian, to be arrested.

After the armistice the Regent returned to the capital, welcomed by the moderate elements of the Iraqi nationalists, and hailed as the saviour of their country from the horrors of war. But those extreme elements who regretted the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime gave free vent to their feelings by making the Jewish community in Baghdad the

¹ *The Times*, 27 May 1941, p. 4.

scapegoat for their failure, and pillaged Jewish shops on 2 June. The Committee of Internal Security was unfortunately unaware of this secret move and made no preparations after the armistice to meet such a possible outburst. The Regent, to stop disorder, immediately called upon Jamil al-Midfa'i, the ex-Prime Minister, to form a new Government. Midfa'i appealed to the patriotism of the people, and both by his moderation and freedom from vindictiveness was able to appease the country and restore order. On 11 June 1941, he gave a broadcast which had a favourable impression on the people. The text of his speech was as follows:¹

My brothers, people of Iraq,

It has often been my lot to take over the reins of responsibility at difficult periods. On this occasion I have formed a Government at the most critical period through which Iraq has ever passed. Our beloved country has been exposed to the greatest dangers in its history—dangers which threatened its very existence, integrity, and independence, had it not been for the wisdom of His Royal Highness the Regent, who did not hesitate to sacrifice his comfort and expose himself to the greatest dangers for the sake of preserving the country's integrity and constitution, and had it not been for the sincerity of some of the army leaders who remained at the head of their troops at the time of danger.

In the past the country has suffered from many difficulties and political intrigues, but by the grace of God it has always emerged from these troubles stronger and more respected than before. The events of the last month, however, were the most serious of all, as they were directed against the head of the State and the actual integrity of the country. They amounted to nothing less than a foul attempt on the part of fifth columnists to stir up trouble in our peace-loving country.

I am sorry to say that some adventurers did not hesitate to co-operate with foreign Powers and their agents in spreading harmful propaganda. Their intention was to make this country a centre of trouble and unrest and thereby transform its happiness and tranquillity into misery, with the object of reducing military pressure in other theatres of war.

You all realize the calamities that befell Iraq in a period of only one month. What would have happened if the trouble had lasted for another month or more?

Our international relationship, and our political and military situation, were the best guarantees to keep us far from the scenes of conflict, but the intrigues of foreigners, their gold and their propaganda, with the plotting of usurpers, drove us into a grave crisis which exposed our very existence to the greatest danger.

The strongest measures will be taken against these criminals, and I

¹ *Iraq Times*, 12 June 1941. Arabic text in *al-Zaman*, 13 June 1941.

wish to assure you that the authorities will take all steps necessary to safeguard peace and tranquillity and our return to normal constitutional life.

We shall relentlessly prosecute all those who were responsible for the recent unhappy events, in order to uproot evil from our midst and save our country from their machinations. I conclude my speech by appealing to all citizens to resume their work, return to normal life, and co-operate with the Government in its measures for the preservation of peace and order.

I appeal to Almighty God to assist us in the attainment of our national aspirations.

In October 1941 General Nuri succeeded Midfa'i as Prime Minister. He followed a more positive policy of co-operation with Great Britain, and punished all those who took active part in the Rashid Ali movement. Rashid Ali, Sab'awi, and the Four Colonels were sentenced to death by a court martial on 4 May 1942, and several hundred persons who either directly or indirectly supported the movement were sent to an internment camp for the duration of the war.¹

General Nuri's long term of office, which lasted from 9 October 1941 to 3 June 1944, enabled him to carry out a number of reforms, such as the amendment of the constitution, the organization of the economic life of the country under war conditions, and the preparation of a new draft electoral law.

¹ Rashid Ali was the only one who escaped from Persia after the British occupation in July 1941. He went to Germany and returned in disguise to Saudi Arabia where he was the guest of Ibn Sa'ud.

X

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SINCE its promulgation on 21 March 1925 the constitution of Iraq has twice been amended; the first time only four months after it came into force, and the second, and by far the most important, eighteen years later.

During the reign of King Faysal I there seems to have been no need to amend the constitution. With his death, however, the balancing factor disappeared and disequilibrium followed. As a result leadership devolved on a group of politicians who had formerly been associated with King Faysal. But personal differences among the politicians became more acute and there was no Faysal to compromise between them. It would have been possible for the politicians to handle the situation through political parties, but such parties, it will be recalled, disappeared after the termination of the mandate.

The struggle for political power was accordingly left to various politicians who made use of local conditions, at suitable opportunities, to come to power. Parliament was weakened both by the Government control of the elections and by the threat of dissolution which was indiscriminately used by the Cabinet. Thus Parliament ceased to be a factor in the formation or fall of Cabinets.

The dilemma that Iraq faced, therefore, was how to end the life of a Cabinet harmful to the country. The King had no express right to dismiss a Cabinet, and Parliament proved incapable of passing a vote of no confidence. There remained available, therefore, only extra-constitutional, or rather unconstitutional, methods by which a Cabinet could be forced to resign. These methods were either political manœuvres, tribal uprisings, or military coups d'état. But these violent methods proved harmful to the security of the State and the Iraqi politicians began to find means of putting an end to them, especially the military coups. As early as 1938 it was keenly felt that Parliament had been unwarrantably weakened and that the dictatorial conduct of the Cabinet should be checked. This was thought to be the best guarantee against military coups d'état. The idea of constitutional reform, therefore, arose from purely practical considerations. When, however, the matter was first of all referred to a

non-governmental committee the project was made too ambitious. The more idealist solutions were dropped, and in practice only those proposals which were of practical value in the circumstances were finally adopted.

PROPOSALS FOR A DRAFT AMENDMENT LAW

As early as 1938 an informal committee was set up by the Midfa'i Government with a view to making certain proposals for amending the constitution.¹ The Committee, whose Chairman was Naji as-Suwaydi, continued its work even after the fall of Midfa'i. Its proposals were presented to General Nuri's Government early in February 1939.² Before the Cabinet had time to consider the proposals, however, King Ghazi was killed on 4 April 1939, and his son, only five years old, became king. Thereupon Amir Abd al-Ilah, the new King's uncle, was appointed Regent by Parliament. The question of amendment was temporarily dropped and the Committee's proposals became only of academic value. It is to be noted, however, that one of the main proposals made was that the concurrence of the Senate should be obtained before the Cabinet could dissolve the Chamber of Deputies. This measure, it was rightly held, would relieve Parliament from the continual threat of dissolution, and might enable it to exercise its right of passing a vote of no confidence in an undesirable Cabinet.

The problem of Cabinet-forming, however, remained unsolved even after the Regent had begun to exercise the King's prerogatives. With all his keen interest in internal politics, the Regent's difficulties became acute when in 1941 the army's intervention caused direct conflict with the Regent himself. Parliament was rendered helpless and the situation became intolerable. In these circumstances the Iraqi Government began to reconsider the question of amending the constitution.

On 11 December 1941 the Government decided to appoint a new committee, under the chairmanship of Jamil al-Midfa'i, in order to prepare certain proposals for amendment. The members of the committee were Senators Jamil al-Midfa'i, Mahmud Subhi ad-Daftari, Mustafa al-Umari, and Umar Nadhmi; Deputies Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, Jamil Abd al-Wahhab, and Abd al-Hadi adh-Dhahir; Senior Officials, Antoine Shammas, Nuri al-Qadhi, and

¹ See speeches by General Nuri and Mahmud Subhi ad-Daftari in the Senate on 9 June 1943. *Proceedings of the Senate*, 22nd Session, 1943, pp. 486, 491.

² For a summary of the proposals, see *az-Zaman*, 10 February 1939.

Abd al-Jabbar Takarli; and two British advisers, Sir Edwin Drower and Mr C. J. Edmonds.

Before the committee set to work the problem arose whether it was actually possible to amend those Articles of the constitution which dealt with the prerogatives of the King, since Article 22 of the constitution states that 'no modification may be introduced into the Organic Law during the Regency concerning the King's prerogatives and succession to the Throne'. Certain members of the Government, however, held the view that if the modifications in the King's prerogatives were to increase, rather than to limit them, then the modification need not be considered contrary to Article 22 of the Organic Law. The urgency of the matter, as the Prime Minister pointed out, induced the Government to refer Article 22 to the High Court in order to give a formal interpretation of the Article.¹ The High Court decided, in its session on 24 December 1941, that if the modification were to increase the King's prerogatives, such an increase was not to be contrary to the last sentence of Article 22 of the Organic Law.²

The Committee set to work on 5 January 1943 with full liberty to formulate its own proposals.³ Its deliberations were conducted in a leisurely manner and covered almost the whole Organic Law; the committee in fact prepared a new draft Organic Law, the main proposals of which may be summarized as follows:

1. In order to avoid the recurrence of coups d'état, the Committee suggested giving Parliament the power, in an emergency, of meeting outside the capital.⁴ It also suggested that Parliament should be prevented from passing Acts of amnesty on behalf of individuals who

¹ See the Prime Minister's speech in the Senate, *Proceedings of the Senate*, 22nd Session, 1943, p. 486.

² Three out of eight members of the High Court dissented. Two of them held that any modification, whether it increased or decreased the King's prerogatives, was prohibited by Article 22 of the Organic Law since that Article stated that no (Arabic 'ma') modification obviously meant of 'any kind'. The third dissented on the ground that the increase in the King's prerogatives would decrease the rights of the people and of Parliament which are safeguarded by the constitution. See the decision of the High Court and the dissenting opinion in *The Iraq Organic Law and its Amendments* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1944) pp. 118-22.

³ Some of the members wanted to know beforehand the viewpoints of the Cabinet as to the amendment. The Cabinet, in answer, declared that it had no definite proposals and that the committee had full liberty to formulate its own. (From an interview with one of the members of the committee.)

⁴ The need for Parliament to have the power of meeting outside the capital was felt during the coup d'état of May 1941, when the Regent wished Parliament to meet in Basrah and his Government to move there while the Rashid Ali Government was in Baghdad.

had taken part in violent action against the State. These two measures, as will be seen, were included in the final draft Amendment Law.

2. A proposal was made to limit the qualifications for membership in the Senate to those who had been Prime Ministers, ministers, senior military officers, or civil servants who had been at least five years in service, and deputies with at least five years' membership of the Chamber of Deputies. This proposal was not included in the final draft Law.

3. It was suggested that the minimum number of Cabinet ministers should be seven, including the Prime Minister. A number of deputy ministers was also suggested, but the Committee was against the principle of appointing ministers without portfolio. This proposal with the exception of the last reservation was included in the final draft law.

4. Finally, the Committee suggested a permissive provision to replace the special courts dealing with religious laws of personal status by civil courts. It was suggested, however, that the present regime should continue until such a time as the Iraqi Government saw fit for their incorporation in the Civil Courts. This proposal was probably the most progressive one made, but it was opposed by a considerable number of the members of Parliament and was not adopted.

The Committee's deliberations lasted for two months; the first meeting took place on 5 January 1943, and the last on 5 March 1943. The proposals, in the form of a new draft Organic Law, were communicated to the Cabinet at once, which in turn sent them to Parliament on 20 March 1943.

THE WORK OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

On 23 March 1943 the Draft Organic Law was introduced into the Chamber of Deputies. After its first reading in the Iraqi Parliament any draft law is usually referred to a standing committee which does the preparatory work and makes its proposals. Since there was no standing committee on constitutional matters the Chamber of Deputies appointed a Special Committee of twenty-five deputies to consider the Draft Organic Law.

The Special Committee set to work on 27 March 1942, and its deliberations lasted for almost two months. The Committee raised an objection to the way in which the whole subject had been approached, claiming that it amounted almost to a new constitution rather than a

Draft Amendment Law. The committee held that if the object was to draw up a new draft Organic Law, then the work was rather one for a Constituent Assembly, which had originally enacted the Iraq Organic Law, than for Parliament. If the object, on the other hand, was to amend the existing Organic Law, then the draft should be in the form of a Draft Amendment Law. The latter was, in fact, the form which was adopted.

Owing to pressure of time, the Government decided to speed up the work. The Parliament which began in 1939 was due to dissolve in 1942. It was feared that there might be a long debate in Parliament before the Draft Amendment Law was passed and that the Chamber of Deputies would be automatically dissolved, having completed its term of four years, before the debate had ended. In order, therefore, to avoid disagreement between the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, in their discussions of the Draft Law, the Government decided to appoint an informal joint committee consisting of one senator,¹ and two deputies,² who were charged with the duty of preparing a final Draft Amendment Law acceptable to both Houses of Parliament.

The Joint Committee held several informal meetings and discussed the whole project of amendment anew. It decided that, while Parliament had the right, under Article 119, to amend the Organic Law, such an amendment might not be of such an extent as to make any considerable alteration in the fundamental principles of the constitution as laid down by the Constituent Assembly. Further modifications were therefore made and the final Draft Amendment Law covered the following main points:

1. A solution was found to the question of succession to the throne. The Organic Law left the question of succession to be regulated by statute, but no such law had yet been enacted, and it was owing to King Faysal II's youth that the matter was brought up for consideration again. It was decided that if there were no heir apparent to the throne, an heir presumptive should be nominated so that there should be no interruption in the succession. It was further held that since the reigning family of Iraq is descended from the late King Husayn of Hijaz, some other member of that family should be nominated in the absence of an heir apparent. Thus it was that the 'ablest'³ Iraqi male heir of the eldest son of King Husayn, Amir Abd

¹ Ibrahim Kamal. ² Tawfiq as-Suwaydi and Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud.

³ The word 'ablest' is the nearest translation of the Arabic word *arshad*, which has the dual meaning of maturity and wisdom.

al-Ilah, who is now the Regent, became heir presumptive until a male son should be born to King Faysal II.

2. The King's prerogatives have been increased by granting him the power to dismiss the Prime Minister.

3. The number of the senators was left indefinite,¹ but must not exceed one-fourth of the number of the deputies. Furthermore, it was decided that Parliament, in case of an emergency, could meet outside the capital. A senator or a deputy, with the concurrence of the House to which he belongs, may accept a position in the Government service in a special capacity, but for two years only.

4. In order to make it more difficult for a Cabinet to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, the members of a dissolved Chamber were given the right to demand the payment of their salaries for the rest of the parliamentary year. This pecuniary compensation, it was held, would discourage the Cabinet from resorting to frequent dissolutions of Parliament.

5. Parliament was prevented from passing an act to pardon individuals who had been convicted of crimes involving violence against the State or the Government, or attempts to coerce the King or Government.

6. It was decided to increase the number of Cabinet ministers, without specifying a maximum, provided that the minimum number be not less than seven, including the Prime Minister. A number of deputy ministers and ministers without portfolio were also added, provided there should be need for them.

7. Finally, a general provision was added by virtue of which any constitutional practice may be adopted from foreign countries by resolution of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate in joint session, provided it is not contrary to the Organic Law (Article 124).

DISCUSSION IN PARLIAMENT

The Draft Amendment Law was debated and passed in the Chamber of Deputies at a single meeting which took place on 27 May 1942, and lasted five hours. The debate began with a motion put forward by Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'id who urged the Chamber to proceed quickly with the debate since Parliament was soon due to dissolve. Discussion on the general principles of the draft, however, took a relatively long time, chiefly because the deputies talked in a general

¹ Before the Second Amendment the number of members could not be more than twenty.

fashion about the nature of constitutions and their amendment. The reasons why amendment was necessary were well explained by Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, a former Prime Minister, who referred to the dangers of coups d'état and the various 'tragedies' which took place during the reign of King Ghazi.¹ Other members expressed more or less the same points of view.

Probably the only point which provoked a lively debate was the Article empowering the King to dismiss his Prime Minister. Jamil Abd al-Wahhab, after a long and elaborate speech on the nature of constitutions, was the first to defend this right on the grounds that 'he who has the right to appoint, has the right to dismiss'.² He pointed out that such a rule has already existed in the constitutions of Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Germany, and even of Britain. The King, however, he continued, cannot exercise that power if the Cabinet is supported by a majority in Parliament, unless he orders a dissolution of Parliament and the new elections return deputies who support him. If the new elections return a majority supporting the old Cabinet, Abd al-Wahhab maintains that the King should take into consideration the wishes of the electorate.

Tawfiq as-Suwaydi asserted that the term 'appointment' in the Iraqi Organic Law was always construed to mean 'selection', and consequently it did not imply the idea of dismissal. He also pointed out that in Great Britain the King cannot dismiss the Cabinet.³

Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'id, in reply, again advocated the need for the right of dismissal at the present stage of the constitutional development of Iraq, owing to the fact that Parliament had not yet been able to exercise its right of passing a vote of no confidence in a Cabinet. But should circumstances change, the new power of the King might become obsolete by lapse of time as it had in Great Britain.⁴ Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, when the debate on the general principles had almost ended, raised the objection which he already made during the meeting of the special committee concerning the modification of the rights of the King during a regency. He contended that an event of such importance ought not to have been undertaken. He was of the

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 42nd Session (1943) pp. 380-1.

² *ibid.* p. 378.

³ *ibid.* pp. 380-1. It is to be noted that Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, when he was Prime Minister in 1929, defended the principle that the King could not dismiss the Prime Minister by refusing to resign when he was asked to do so.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 389.

opinion that the whole question of amendment should have been postponed until a more favourable moment after the war.¹

The debate on the general principles was cut short by a motion to stop further discussion. The Draft Amendment Law was then taken up article by article and was discussed and carried in somewhat of a hurry. Only Article 12, concerning the King's new prerogative to dismiss a Prime Minister, was debated further in any detail. At this stage, the Prime Minister moved an amendment so that the Article should read, 'The King, in case of necessity and when it conforms to public interest, can dismiss the Prime Minister'. Some deputies opposed the Prime Minister's new motion. The Prime Minister pointed out that there were senators who objected to the clause as it stood without qualification. Other deputies, such as Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, saw no harm in the Prime Minister's motion and urged its acceptance. The Article, as amended, was eventually carried, as were all the other Articles of the draft. It is to be noted that the Draft Amendment Law was debated in haste and the pressure of time was largely responsible for its being enacted in a simplified form. The amendment was carried by a unanimous vote of all deputies present, i.e. 78 to nil.

The Draft Amendment Law was informally debated in the Senate at the same time as it was being debated in the Chamber of Deputies, but the formal debate did not begin until 9 June 1942. As was the case in the Chamber of Deputies, the draft was referred to a special committee on 30 May 1942; the debate began on 9 June and the draft was passed in one meeting. The Regent, who was interested in the Senate debate, attended in person.

Before the debate began, the Prime Minister gave an elaborate account of the origin of the movement for an amendment. He declared that the late King Faysal I had in mind an amendment to the constitution and had he lived longer he would have certainly urged the second amendment himself. The Prime Minister gave details of his own early career and experiences during the Ottoman regime which had led him to believe in the necessity for amending the constitution. He also gave an account of the steps taken since 1938, of the favourable attitude of the Regent, and of the advice of some responsible Iraqi politicians with whom he discussed the details of the procedure to be followed until the draft was completed. In referring to the Article which empowered the King to dismiss the Prime Minister, he declared that the Regent's wish was rather that the Article should be framed

¹ *ibid.* pp. 390–1.

briefly and not qualified by lengthy conditions. Some of the Iraqi politicians, however, he added, were not in favour of this and argued that it would involve the King in partisan issues. The Prime Minister's point of view was that the present state of affairs needed some such power, but that when conditions changed this power would become obsolete. The Prime Minister added that as a compromise the Article was now qualified by a sentence to the effect that the King would dismiss the Prime Minister only in case of necessity and if it were in conformity with public interest.¹

Opposition to this Article was more apparent and more forceful in the Senate than in the Chamber of Deputies. Senator Mahmud Subhi ad-Daftari was probably the most ardent opponent. Throughout his various speeches two main reasons appeared for his opposition. In the first place, he maintained that Article 22 of the Organic Law expressly stipulated that no modification whatsoever should be made in the King's prerogatives during a regency. But ad-Daftari, who was also a member of the High Court, gave a dissenting opinion. The second reason for his opposition was that war-time conditions, when freedom of speech was not fully assured, made it the wrong moment for initiating an amendment.²

An entirely different kind of opposition came from Senator Umar Nazmi, who did not object to the original Article which empowered the King to dismiss the Prime Minister, but who objected to the qualifying clause added by the Chamber of Deputies. He desired the King to have the express right, unqualified by any condition, to dismiss his Prime Minister. He also voted against the draft since he considered that there should be an Article to the effect that if a considerable number of ministers tendered their resignations, leaving less than seven (the legal minimum) in office, the Cabinet should be considered to have automatically resigned.³

Finally, there was some discussion on who would decide when it was a case of 'necessity', and what is meant by 'public interest'. Senator Ibrahim Kamal expressed some doubt that the vagueness of these terms might lead once more to disagreement between the King and the Cabinet.⁴ Most of the senators, however, thought that the King alone could decide on these points.

¹ *Proceedings of the Senate*, 22nd Session (1943) pp. 485-90.

² ibid. pp. 490-3, 493-4.

³ ibid. pp. 497-8, 504-6.

⁴ ibid. p. 511.

The Draft Amendment Law, in spite of the opposition of certain Senators, was passed by a majority of 12 to 2 among those present.¹

According to Article 119, the Chamber of Deputies must be dissolved as soon as a Draft Amendment is passed, and new elections must take place so that the new Parliament can finally decide either to confirm the decision of the former Parliament or to reject it. The Chamber of Deputies was accordingly dissolved on 9 June 1942, and elections took place for the new Chamber in September 1942.

APPRAISAL OF THE AMENDMENT LAW

The main reason which prompted the Iraqi Government to amend the constitution was to solve problems of an emergency character, such as the dismissal of an undesirable Cabinet, or fundamental questions of long standing, such as the need for strengthening Parliament. The first kind of emergency, in its former military character, has not yet arisen since the constitution was amended; while the latter can only be answered by Parliament regaining its confidence. It is to be noted, however, that Parliament could never be strengthened simply by weakening the Cabinet; the problem should rather be solved by amending the electoral law in such a manner as to give full freedom to the electorate in choosing their representatives. The new Electoral Law, passed in 1946, did not fulfil this condition and, therefore, the general elections of 1947 and 1948 failed to return as strong a representative body as the nation had hoped for. Furthermore, an endeavour should be made to educate the electorate itself by raising its cultural and social standards. However, raising the standard of the electorate is not only a matter of law, but also of time and of careful attention during the transition period.

There was much discussion, it will be recalled, of the relative value of the Article giving the King power to dismiss his Prime Minister. The only justification given was that it would avoid the recurrence of coups d'état. While the Regent has so far not resorted to such a measure, it undoubtedly provides a legal method for ending the life of a harmful Cabinet. It may be noted that two Cabinets² fell because they were threatened by the Senate and public opinion rather than because they actually lost the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies, and it may be argued that these two Cabinets might not have resigned

¹ See text of the Second Amendment Law in *The Iraqi Organic Law and Its Amendments* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1944) pp. 72-88.

² The Suwaydi (1946) and Jabr' Cabinets (1948).

if they had not been afraid of dismissal by the Regent. It should be noted, however, that to place responsibility for a final decision of this nature with the head of the State will be disagreeable for him if the issue is a purely partisan one. Such a case, of course, may not occur frequently; yet should it occur, everything will depend on the wisdom of the monarch and the extent to which he makes use of the moral rather than the legal strength of the Article.

The Second Amendment to the constitution has at least settled the question of succession to the throne. Moreover, the Articles which concern the number of Cabinet Ministers, by limiting the number to a minimum rather than a maximum, seem to be more suitable than they were in the original Draft Organic Law.

The Second Amendment Law has added the following Article to the Constitution:

Article 124: Constitutional methods which are neither mentioned in, nor forbidden by this law, but are practised by constitutional States, may be adopted by decision of Parliament in joint Assembly, and observed as constitutional rules.

The reason for adding this Article was to counteract the rigidity of Articles 118 and 119. The writer had the opportunity of discussing the interpretation of Article 124 with some members of the Parliamentary Committee on amendment and they seem to contend that their aim was to modify the rigidity of the constitution. Sir Edwin Drower, former adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Justice, however, is of the opinion that Article 124 has rendered the Organic Law more rigid by permitting the adoption of foreign constitutional practices (which could easily have been adopted by an ordinary law), since their removal cannot be made except under Article 119. While the writer shares his opinion that any foreign constitutional practice, if not contrary to the provisions of the Organic Law, could be adopted by an ordinary law, he does not see why, if it is adopted under Article 124 (by joint assembly of both Houses of Parliament), it may not be removed or amended in the same way in which it is adopted. Foreign constitutional practices need not be regarded as part of the Iraqi Organic Law and, therefore, are not subject to Article 119.¹

Finally, the Second Amendment Law has not touched certain

¹ For full discussion on the interpretation of Article 124 and the rigidity of the Iraqi Constitution, see M. Khadduri, 'Has the Iraqi Constitution become less or more Rigid after the Second Amendment', *The Judicial Journal*, vol. 4 (May 1945) pp. 46-54.

Articles of the Organic Law which are either ambiguous or have become obsolete. Certain Articles, such as 26, 63, and even 124, which has been newly added, are ambiguous. Article 118 and the first clause of Article 119, dealing with the way of amending the Organic Law during the period 1925–30, are no longer necessary and are only of academic value.

REVIVAL OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Enlightened Iraqi politicians deplored the increasingly authoritarian tendencies in the Executive since the disappearance of political parties.¹ Since the constitution was amended with a view to controlling the Executive, it was keenly felt that the time had come for reviving political parties. In his speech on 27 December 1945, the Regent, among other things, promised the formation of political parties and freedom for their activities in order to ensure social and economic progress.²

When the Suwaydi Government was formed in February 1946, it granted permission for the formation of new political parties. Five parties were officially formed on 20 April 1946.

The new parties were formed mainly on the basis of domestic issues. The Istiqlal (Independence) Party, which advocates a strong Arab nationalist policy and moderate social reform, is right wing. Most of its members were either former members of the Muthanna Club or sympathizers with the Rashid Ali coup d'état. A number of them were detained during the last war in internment camps. They are suspicious of foreign influence and are both anti-British and anti-Russian. The leader of the party is Muhammad Mahdi Kubbah, formerly vice-President of the Muthanna Club. The party's official organ is *Liwa' al-Istiqlal*.

A centre party is the Ahrar (Liberal) Party, formed by the Suwaydi group, which advocates moderate social reform. After the fall of the Suwaydi Government, leadership of the party was first assumed by Sa'd Salih, since Tawfiq as-Suwaydi resigned from the party, and then by Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, after Sa'd Salih's death in 1948. The official daily paper of the party is *Sawt al-Ahrar*.

The National Democratic (al-Watani al-Democrat) Party, left of centre, mainly comprises former Ahali members, led by Kamil al-Chadirchi. The party advocates moderate socialist principles, but the

¹ See statements to this effect in *al-Bilad*, 1, 13, 16, and 19 November 1944.

² See p. 265.

main emphasis is laid on democracy rather than socialism. Among the prominent members of the party are Chadirchi, Muhammad Hadid, and Husayn Jamil. The official daily paper is *Sawt al-Ahali*.

Further to the left is the National Union (Ittihad al-Watani) Party, led by Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim, a former Ahali member.¹ The party, though professing more avowed socialist ideas than the National Democratic Party, laid even more emphasis on democracy. The party's organ, *as-Siyassah*, was suppressed by the Umari Government in 1946.

The Sha'b (People's) Party, led by Aziz Sharif, laid more emphasis on socialism than the former two parties, and proved to be the most outspoken in attacking British imperialism and favouring Russian foreign policy. Its official daily paper, *al-Watan*, was also suppressed by the Umari Government.

There was an immediate favourable response to the formation of these parties, which alarmed both the elder politicians and those with vested interests. The parties soon realized that every new Cabinet, while it gave lip service to the value of political parties, has in fact tightened control of their activities. The reason, it seems, is that the five parties represented in the main the younger generation, since those with vested interests and the elder politicians did not form an official political party. But behind the scenes they influenced every Government to limit the activities of the five parties. The Palestine War (1948-9), which necessitated declaration of martial law in the country, was used for the further curtailment of political activities. Two parties, the People's and the National Union, were suppressed by the Jabr Government on the grounds of their socialist ideas. Two other parties, the Liberal and National Democratic, having found the futility of struggling in a rigidly authoritarian regime, agreed on 1 December 1948 temporarily to suspend their activities until circumstances are more favourable.² Only the Istiqlal Party has continued to survive, while the elder politicians, representing various shades of opinion, form a number of groupings which gravitate around certain leading personalities. In order to keep a balance between the left and right parties, General Nuri, who is probably the most prepared among the elder politicians to admit the value of political

¹ See pp. 72-5.

² For the two parties' official statements to this effect, see *Sawt al-Ahrar*, 3 December 1948; and *Sawt al-Ahali*, 3 December 1948. The National Democratic Party resumed its activity early in 1950.

parties, formed in 1949 the Ittihad ad-Dasturi (Constitutional Union) Party, comprising members of the old and the younger generation. It is expected that the formation of this new party, followed by the abolition of martial law and press censorship, which might induce the self-suspended parties to renew their activities, would lead to a salutary balance between the old and the new generations.

THE NEW ELECTORAL LAW

The idea of revising the Electoral Law goes back to 1935 when Yasin al-Hashimi was swept into power after the tribal uprisings in the Middle Euphrates. It was keenly felt that the Electoral Law had permitted too rigid control of the elections by the Government and did not allow adequate representation of the people. On 24 June 1935 the Prime Minister proposed to the Minister of Justice to form a committee to study the law in force and make proposals of revision. On 4 July 1935 a committee met under the chairmanship of Muhammad Zaki, Minister of Justice, and held one sitting in which it was decided that there was decidedly a need for revision in order to ensure adequate representation. But no action was taken.

In 1940, when General Nuri was in power, the Minister of Interior, Umar Nazmi, prepared a new draft Electoral Law in which the representation of trade unions was provided for and the division of the country into smaller constituencies, each to elect one deputy. On 1 January 1940 the draft was sent to the Minister of Justice to be studied by a legal committee. The Ministry of Justice, in consultation with Sir Edwin Drower, the legal adviser, objected to the principle of the representation of trade unions on the grounds that it contravened the constitution, which laid down the general principle of the representation of one deputy for every 20,000 persons. The matter did not proceed further than that.

In 1941, when General Nuri was again in power and had been able to amend the constitution, he took keen interest in revising the Electoral Law. On 9 November 1943 he issued an order forming a new committee, composed of politicians representing various shades of opinion, to prepare a new draft Electoral Law. The Committee, whose Chairman was Tawfiq as-Suwaidi, was composed of Nasrat al-Farisi, Rida ash-Shabibi, Kamil Chadirchi, Mustafa al-Umari, Sadiq al-Bassam, Sir Edwin Drower, and Mr C. J. Edmonds. The Committee held fourteen sittings between 20 November 1943 and 30 April 1944. The old Electoral Law of 1924 was closely examined

on the basis of earlier proposals and past experience. General Nuri, in a letter dated 21 November 1943 to Suwaydi, Chairman of the Committee, stated that in submitting a draft Electoral Law to the Committee, he did not intend to limit the freedom of the Committee; but he merely submitted it for their consideration. He suggested, however, consideration of the possibility of giving representation to trade unions; of substituting direct for indirect elections for persons who had received high school education; and the introduction of the principle of nomination.

In the third sitting of the Committee, on 4 December 1943, Chadirchi suggested the substitution of direct for indirect elections without qualification. Sadiq al-Bassam, who rejected the proposal, thought the election returns would then be in favour of the tribes, since they constitute the majority of the country. He accordingly suggested dividing the country into two main divisions for the purpose of the elections: the tribesmen and the city dwellers. He thought that direct elections might be tried out among the city dwellers. Both proposals were rejected, and the principle of indirect elections was reasserted.

The principle of the representation of trade unions, which was suggested by General Nuri, was discussed at the ninth sitting on 30 January 1944, but was dismissed as contrary to the constitution. If such a principle were to be adopted, the constitution would first have to be amended to permit the representation of groups numbering less than 20,000 persons.

Finally, the principle of literacy as prerequisite for voting or the election of a deputy was suggested by Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, Chairman of the Committee, in the tenth sitting on 21 March 1944. The majority attacked this principle since the great majority of the population is illiterate; but in spite of the opposition of Chadirchi, Mr Edmonds and Sir Edwin Drower approved the principle of literacy as necessary for any candidate for election.

It is to be noted that the more idealistic principles were dropped and only the more practical ones were adopted. It may be said that three important innovations in the new law were accepted as it passed the Committee: (1) the requirement that the date of the election must be publicly announced at a fixed interval in advance (previously instructions, with the Government lists of nominees, were often sent only the night before); (2) the requirement that candidates must announce their candidature publicly in advance (previously

candidates either lobbied the Minister of the Interior or just waited hoping that their social status, or nuisance value, would bring them on to the Government list); (3) the establishment of small—nearly all one, a few two-member—constituencies instead of the *liwa'* constituencies which had between two and fifteen members. This was intended to make it more difficult for the Government in power to impose perfect strangers on a district.

After the fall of General Nuri's Government (3 June 1944) the draft Electoral Law was shelved for about two years by the Pachachi Government which showed no interest in completing the work of its predecessor. In February 1946 Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, Chairman of the Committee which prepared the draft Electoral Law, formed a Government and decided to present the draft law to Parliament for legislation.

On 8 May 1946, the draft Electoral Law was discussed by the Chamber of Deputies. Salman ash-Shaykh Da'ud, while he approved indirect elections, proposed to grant all graduates of colleges and universities the right of voting as secondary electors. The proposal was rejected.¹ Abd al-Karim al-Uzri revived the proposal of direct elections, but this also was rejected.² Razzuq Ghannam, a Christian deputy, proposed to raise the number of religious minorities from four to six for each of the Christian and Jews. The proposal was adopted.³ Another proposal was adopted which dropped the principle of literacy as prerequisite for secondary electors. The debate in the Chamber of Deputies lasted for four sittings (8 May–15 May 1946), but most of it consisted of an attack on the ways and means of applying the old Law rather than the principles of the new Law. Rida ash-Shabibi and Ibrahim Attar Bashi saw no defects in the old Law and criticized the various Governments which misapplied the Law.⁴ Nazif ash-Shawi warned the Chamber that the fate of the new Law would be the same as the old if the Government would not abstain from controlling the elections.⁵

In the Senate the draft Law was considered in one sitting, on 23 May 1946, and was approved without alteration. The Law was immediately sent to the Regent for signature and was approved on 27 May 1946.⁶

Two elections have been held under the new Electoral Law, in

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 10th Session, 1945–6, p. 339.

² *ibid.* p. 347.

³ *ibid.* pp. 363–4, 390.

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 360–3.

⁵ *ibid.* pp. 351–2.

⁶ For text of the Law see *The Iraq Government Gazette*, vol. 24 (8 June 1946) pp. 1–8.

1947 and 1948. The first, organized by General Nuri, who originally sponsored the preparation of the draft Law, was an improvement on former elections in permitting a little freedom in the cities; but the elections in the rural and tribal sections were probably as rigidly controlled as in former elections. In the 1948 elections there was less complaint than in the previous year; but, it seems, completely free elections are not only a matter of law, but also of time and education until the majority of the people are able to make full use of the right of franchise.

XI

FOREIGN POLICY

THE emancipation of Iraq from the mandates system fulfilled one of the fundamental aspirations of the Iraqi nationalists, namely, the rise of an Arab country to statehood with a seat in a world assembly. But this remarkable achievement, important as it was from the international viewpoint, was regarded by the nationalists only as a step toward the realization of their ultimate national objective, namely the independence and unity of the whole Arab world.

After Iraq's rise to statehood, the Iraqi nationalists were divided into two schools of thought on the foreign policy to be followed by the new Arab State. There was, in the first place, the pan-Arab school which advocated an aggressive foreign policy in order to help the other Arab countries in their struggle for independence. The pan-Arabs saw no hope in the independent struggle of each Arab country against imperialism and urged upon the Iraqi Government to give them active support. The other, or the moderate school, advocated an independent foreign policy for Iraq on the basis of her peculiar internal circumstances, such as the existence of an important Kurdish minority, and Iraq's special treaty relationship with Great Britain. This school, often referred to as the Iraqi school, pledged co-operation with the other Arab countries but only on the understanding that each would maintain its separate identity and independence.

King Faysal I saw certain fundamental weaknesses in each school. As an Arab who took active part in the various stages of the Arab nationalist movement, in Istanbul, Hijaz, and Syria, he naturally sympathized with the pan-Arab school and hoped to achieve the independence and unity of all the Arab countries. But as the architect of the Iraqi State he hesitated to follow the hazardous foreign policy advocated by the pan-Arab school, which would expose Iraq to danger. Faysal accordingly laid down four fundamental principles which became the foundation of Iraq's foreign policy.

First, Faysal genuinely believed and worked for an Anglo-Arab friendship. In his treaty negotiations with Britain, he had at no time been prepared to sacrifice Arab rights; but he proceeded on the

sincere assumption that British and Arab interests were not essentially irreconcilable. He regarded the Treaty of 1930 as the corner-stone for the safeguarding of Iraq's independence and the basis of Anglo-Arab friendship. Furthermore, he urged co-operation with Britain in order to help liberate the other Arab countries which were still struggling for their freedom.

Secondly, Faysal advocated a 'good-neighbour' policy with all the Middle East countries. Faced with a number of difficulties with his neighbours (dynastic rivalry with Ibn Sa'ud and unsettled frontiers with Persia), he tried to conciliate them and convert them into good, rather than hostile, neighbours. He visited Turkey and Persia in 1931 and laid the foundation for future understanding with these countries which culminated, after his death, in the signing of the Sa'dabad Pact.¹ He met his rival Ibn Sa'ud in the Persian Gulf and impressed him with his lofty ideal of putting national before personal interests.²

Thirdly, though proud of his own achievement in Iraq, Faysal never overlooked his obligations towards the Arabs in Syria and Palestine. He was, it is true, unable to give any active support to these countries in their struggle for freedom; but he often sent notes to France and England pleading for sympathy with the national aspirations of Syria and Palestine. His approach was conspicuously mild, because he realized the weakness of his position and that the time had not yet come to render any effective support to the neighbouring Arabic countries.

Fourthly, Faysal, who was King of Syria before Iraq, always aspired for an eventual union between the two countries. He believed, with the moderate school, that an Arab union should be achieved only by a gradual development of the various Arab countries towards independence and that they then might voluntarily join into a federal union. Whether Faysal had in mind an all-Arab union or merely a Fertile Crescent union is difficult to determine; but he certainly did aspire to achieve in his lifetime a union between Iraq and the entire Syrian coast.

Faysal's ideas and aspirations, especially his 'good-neighbour' policy, were shared by all his ministers; but his conception of Anglo-Arab co-operation commanded respect only among his intimate associates such as General Nuri as-Sa'id, General Ja'far al-Askari, and Rustum Haydar. Yasin al-Hashimi, leader of the Ikha Party, while he admitted the value of British friendship, was more enthu-

¹ See pp. 247-8, below.

² See p. 239, below.

siastic about Faysal's Arab policy. Rashid Ali, Hikmat Sulayman, and Abu 't-Timman opposed Anglo-Arab co-operation and often denounced British 'imperialism'. Independent politicians such as Midfa'i, Ali Jawdat, and Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, who represented the moderate school, were always in favour of Anglo-Arab co-operation.

After Faysal's death the leaders of Iraq, though they often made contradictory statements on foreign policy, followed in the main Faysal's ideas on foreign policy. The frontier dispute with Persia was finally settled,¹ and Faysal's 'good-neighbour' policy with Turkey and Persia bore fruit in the signing of the Sa'dabad Pact. The principle of close co-operation with the other Arab countries made further strides after Faysal's death which not only resulted in the signing of the treaty of Arab brotherhood and alliance with Saudi Arabia and Yaman, but also culminated in the establishment of the Arab League.² Viewed in retrospect, these accomplishments have, within the span of a decade, advanced the Arab cause of unity and independence far beyond what was contemplated at the time of Faysal's death.

With regard to Iraq's relations with Great Britain, the Treaty of Alliance of 30 June 1930 may be regarded as the corner-stone for Anglo-Iraqi co-operation. Though the treaty was concluded before 1932, it is of value to discuss its background and provisions before we turn for a discussion of Iraq's foreign relations since 1932.

THE ANGLO-IRAQI TREATY OF 1930

The Treaty of 1922, which was concluded on the basis of the League mandate, proved to be an unsatisfactory compromise between Britain and Iraq. The Iraqi nationalists, it will be recalled,³ were not prepared to accept any plan short of complete independence and the abrogation of the mandate. 'The mere terms "Mandatory" and "Mandate"'⁴ said Sir Percy Cox, British High Commissioner in Iraq, 'were anathema to them from the first.' Various attempts were made to re-define Anglo-Iraqi relations, without fundamentally altering the obligations of Great Britain towards the League of Nations, such as the treaties of 1926 and 1927. These satisfied neither the Iraqi Government nor the nationalists, who aimed at nothing less than the abrogation of the mandate system itself. The British treaties were deemed by the nationalists not only to have impeded the realization of Iraq's political

¹ See pp. 240–6, below.

² See pp. 251–9, below.

³ See Chap. I, pp. 5–6.

⁴ Florence Bell, ed., *Letters of Gertrude Bell* (London, 1927) vol. 2, p. 235.

aspirations, but were also regarded as inimical to her social and economic development.¹ This anti-mandate feeling was best expressed by the term *al-Wad' ash-Shadh* (the perplexing predicament) which had become popular in the press and was applied by the nationalists to account for almost every disappointment in the realization of Iraq's independence. It was indeed an expression which ascribed all political ills to the dual authority of the mandate system. The nationalists argued that there were two Governments in Iraq, one foreign and the other national, and that such a regime was an anomaly, possible in theory but altogether unworkable in practice. The term *al-Wad' ash-Shadh* and all that it entailed has been ably defined in the report of the British Government on the administration of Iraq for 1928 as follows:²

The term is used to cover the anomaly that Iraq has national sovereignty and is yet under a mandate, to suggest the dilemma of Ministers, constitutionally responsible to Parliament, but subject to the influence of their British advisers. . . . Iraqi Ministers and administrators profess to find 'perplexing predicament' in every department of the administration of the country. The Iraq Government controls and administers the railways and the Basra port, but does not own them; can declare martial law, but, under the Military Agreement, cannot administer it; and has an army but cannot move it except with the concurrence of the British High Commissioner. Foreign Governments (which are members of the League of Nations) can discriminate in tariff and other matters against Iraqi subjects, but the Iraqi Government has no power to retaliate; foreign subjects have special judicial privileges in Iraq while Iraqi subjects have no reciprocal advantages abroad. . . . It is all the anomalies and perplexities of this kind that arise continually out of Iraq's present treaty relations with Great Britain, which create in the imagination of the more fervid patriots the irritating situation which has earned the name of *al-Wad' ash-Shadh*.

In September 1929 Great Britain finally decided to put an end to the discredited mandate regime. The coming into power of the Labour Government (5 June 1929) had probably influenced this decision. This change of Government was followed by a similar one in Iraq, which was not Labour in the English sense, but a liberal nationalist Government, which was considered capable of pressing for the attainment of Iraq's national aspirations. For it was thought by many

¹ See Fahmi al-Mudarris, *Maqalat* (Baghdad, 1931) vol. 1, pp. 8, 23-4, 112-18, 136-9.

² G. B., Colonial Office, *Report by H.B.M.'s Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Iraq, 1928* (London, H.M.S.O., 1929; Colonial no. 44) pp. 26-7.

liberals, including King Faysal, that a Labour Government in England would pursue a policy favourable to nationalist aspirations. On 14 September 1929 Sir Gilbert Clayton, the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, was authorized to communicate to the Iraqi Government the intention of his Government to terminate the mandate, and to state that Britain¹

. . . would support the admission of Iraq into the League of Nations in 1932 and would open negotiations with the Iraqi Government, with a view to concluding a treaty defining their relations with Iraq in a liberal spirit on the basis of the proposals for an Anglo-Egyptian settlement.

Neither the Iraqi Prime Minister, Sir Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun, nor the British High Commissioner, Sir Gilbert Clayton, was destined to see the fruits of his endeavours—the first committed suicide on 13 November 1929, as the result of extreme nationalist pressure and a feeling that the Iraqis were ungrateful for his sincere efforts on their behalf, and the latter died after a short illness on 11 September 1929.² The two statesmen who laid down the provisions of the new treaty between Britain and Iraq were General Nuri as-Sa'id and Sir Francis Humphrys. General Nuri accepted the invitation of King Faysal to form a new Government on 25 March 1930, and he addressed the following letter to the King which shows his sincere desire to carry out Faysal's policy:³

Your Majesty,

Being a soldier who for over ten years has had the honour to carry out Your Majesty's orders amidst the difficulties of war and politics because of my belief in Your Majesty's high destiny and because of what I know to be Your Majesty's fervent desire for the realization of the great hopes of Your Majesty's people, that is to say the complete independence of Your Majesty's Kingdom; I cannot for a moment hesitate to obey Your Majesty's command and to devote all that with which Almighty God has endowed me to the realization of the aspirations of the country to which Your Majesty yourself has already consecrated all your endeavours.

General Nuri's chief concern after the formation of his Cabinet was to negotiate a new treaty with Britain which was to regulate the re-

¹ G. B., Colonial Office, *Policy in Iraq: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies*. Cmd. 3440. (London, H.M.S.O., 1929.)

² See Abd al-Muhsin's letter to his son, stating his reasons for committing suicide, *Baghdad Times*, 14 November 1929. See also G. B., Colonial Office, *Report . . . on the Administration of Iraq, 1929* (London, H.M.S.O., 1930; Colonial no. 55) pp. 16, 19.

³ *Report . . . on the Administration of Iraq, 1930* (London, H.M.S.O., 1931; Colonial no. 62) p. 12.

lations between the two countries after Iraq's admission to the League of Nations. Formal negotiations began on 1 April 1930, though the matter had been under discussion before Sir Abd al-Muhsin's death. The treaty was finally signed on 30 June 1930. It provided for the establishment, after the termination of the mandate, of a 'close alliance' between Great Britain and Iraq, and that 'there shall be full and frank consultation between them in all matters of foreign policy which may affect their common interest'. The Iraqi Government undertook responsibility for the maintenance of internal order and for the defence of the country from foreign aggression, except in cases provided by the treaty. Any dispute between Iraq and a third State, involving the risk of war was to be discussed by Iraq and Britain together with a view to its settlement in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations and other international procedures applicable to the case. In case of war in spite of these efforts, each party would come to the aid of the other in the capacity of an ally. In the event of an imminent menace of war, the two parties would concert as to the necessary measures of defence. Iraq recognized that the maintenance and protection of essential communications for Great Britain was in the common interest of both parties. Sites were therefore granted for air bases which were selected by Britain near Basrah and in the west of the Euphrates, as well as localities for the maintenance of troops 'on the understanding that the presence of those forces shall not constitute in any manner an occupation, and will in no way prejudice the sovereign rights of Iraq'.¹ The treaty was to come into force after Iraq had been admitted to membership of the League of Nations and was to remain in force for twenty-five years.²

The treaty was severely criticized by the opposition parties in Iraq and by the imperialists in Britain. The opposition press in Iraq condemned the treaty as inconsistent with the sovereignty of Iraq, and declared that the independence promised in the treaty was illusory. The more specific points of their attack related to the aid which Iraq was required to give in case Britain was engaged in war and the grant of air bases on Iraqi territory—at Habbaniyah and Shu'aybah—which were denounced as incompatible with the independence of Iraq. Some of the critics went so far as to argue that

¹ The two sites selected were at Habbaniyah and Shu'aybah.

² The annexure to the treaty dealt with more specific points such as the movement of British forces in Iraq and the equipment of armaments for the Government of Iraq.

Iraq would virtually become a British protectorate after the termination of the League mandate.¹ While he had very shrewdly made use of the opposition to obtain better terms during the negotiation of the treaty, Faysal showed some dissatisfaction with the extremists and regarded them as obstructing Iraq's advance to the position of an independent State.² Finally, it was argued in some political circles of Baghdad that the treaty was concluded when Iraq was still under the British mandate. But it is also true that Iraq was emancipated from the mandate by virtue of the treaty itself.

Meanwhile the Iraqi Parliament was dissolved in July with a view 'to affording the nation an opportunity of expressing an opinion' on the treaty. The opposition parties, led by Yasin al-Hashimi and Ja'far Abu 't-Timman, made an effort to organize a national boycott, since they thought they could not have a majority in Parliament. The elections, however, were completed in October and the boycott campaign had appreciable results only in Samarra'. The election returns showed a victory for the Government candidates; only six deputies were returned who were not self-declared supporters of the Government. The treaty was approved on 16 November 1931, after a debate which lasted over four hours in the Chamber of Deputies. The opposition deputies spoke at length and denounced the treaty as an instrument for the benefit of British imperial interests and maintained that it would entail great sacrifices. Its ratification, they declared, would be an eternal disgrace. The deputies who argued in favour of the treaty, however, emphasized its tangible advantages, such as the emancipation of Iraq from the mandate, and the recognition of Iraq's independence and membership of the League of Nations.³ Approval of the treaty was finally carried by a majority of 69 out of 82 present in the Chamber of Deputies, and eleven out of sixteen present in the Senate. This was regarded as a great victory for the policy of the Government.

In Great Britain the treaty was received with a certain misgiving and suspicion. On 31 January 1930, when negotiations with Iraq were still going on, Sir Samuel Hoare, former Secretary of State for Air and a member of the Opposition, warned the British Government that British imperial air communications across Iraq might

¹ See Fahmi al-Mudarris, *Maqalat*, vol. 2, p. 4 ff.; and Amin Rihani, *Qalb al-Iraq* (Beirut, 1935) pp. 215-18.

² See Faysal's speech on 2 October 1931, *al-Alam al-'Arabi*, Baghdad, 30 October 1931.

³ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 3rd Session, 1931, pp. 57-92.

become insecure. He also raised certain inquiries with regard to the future position of minorities after Iraq attained her independence. Outside Parliament the treaty was attacked by the imperialists on the grounds that Britain had surrendered an important area admirable for air training,¹ that the treaty would involve Britain in war or complications arising from Iraq's relations with her neighbours, and that important racial and religious minorities would be left at the mercy of the Arab majority.² In other quarters in Britain the criticism was made that the withdrawal of the British forces was not to take place immediately after the treaty would come into force.³

In France the Paris press criticized the treaty because the termination of the British mandate would encourage Syria and Lebanon—which were manifestly more politically mature than Iraq—to press for a similar procedure. One representative French criticism may be quoted as follows:⁴

It does not seem excessive to conclude that the termination of the mandate in Iraq will in fact have the result of removing a far-reaching international control, the forms of which are fixed by the terms of the mandate and by the working of the institutions at Geneva, and putting in its place a special British control; and that the forms in which this British control will be applied will depend solely upon the choice of the two parties directly concerned. Iraq will cease to be under the aegis of the League of Nations and will become in reality a member of the British Commonwealth. . . . No doubt the League of Nations will desire to be precisely informed as to which of [the] responsibilities [which are to be transferred to Iraq from the mandatory Power] survive and as to the measure in which they are to survive. What is to become of the liberty of conscience, the liberty of worship, the equality of races, creeds and languages, the right of the several communities to preserve their own schools—things which are all inscribed in the organic statute which the Iraqi public authorities will henceforward have full discretion to modify? What is to become of foreign privileges of a juridical order, of the economic equality [in Iraq] between the States Members of the League of Nations, and of the protection of missionaries? What is to become, in general, of that protection of minorities upon which the attention of the Commission of Inquiry and of the Council at Geneva was concentrated with special intensity at the time of the delimitation of

¹ Mr Winston Churchill's reference to Baghdad in 1920 as the 'Clapham Junction' of the air was reiterated.

² See 'Ghafir', 'Great Britain and Iraq', *The Contemporary Review*, vol. 139 (June 1931) pp. 742–9; and 'Fusilier', 'The Independence of Iraq', *The Fortnightly*, vol. 132 (September 1932) pp. 315–25.

³ A. J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1930* (London, Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1931) pp. 325–6.

⁴ *Le Temps*, Paris, 1 August 1930. Quoted by A. J. Toynbee, op. cit. p. 327.

the Turco-Iraqi frontier? It was this consideration that dictated both of the conditions upon which the assignment of the Mosul Vilayet to Iraq was made to depend.

At its meeting on 30 October 1931, the treaty was discussed by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations and it was pointed out that while Article I was vague and might allow one of the parties to interfere in the other's policy, this possibility was mutual, so that this Article could not be regarded as restricting Iraq's independence. 'But', said the Chairman of the Commission, 'it was necessary to bear in mind the respective importance of the two contracting parties, one of whom possessed means of intervention and control which the other did not.'¹ M. Rappard said that Article V seemed to him more serious than Article I since it 'gave one of the contracting parties a hold over the other'. M. Palacios feared that the treaty might transform Iraq, after the termination of the mandate, into 'an ordinary protectorate'.² The final opinion of the Mandate Commission, however, as formulated in its report to the Council of the League of Nations, was as follows:³

After having carefully considered the text of these undertakings [the treaty and its annexure] and having heard the explanations and information on the subject from the accredited representative, the Commission came to the conclusion that, although certain of the provisions of the Treaty of Alliance of 30 June 1930, were somewhat unusual in treaties of this kind, the obligations entered into by Iraq towards Great Britain did not explicitly infringe the independence of the new State.

On 4 November 1929 the British Foreign Office sent a note to the League of Nations announcing the decision of His Majesty's Government to recommend Iraq for admission to membership in the League of Nations in 1932.

At its session in November 1929, the Permanent Mandates Commission began at once to consider the British proposal concerning Iraq's admission to the League. It held several meetings in order to examine both the general principles governing the termination of a mandate and the political maturity achieved by Iraq. The British Government prepared a *Special Report on the Progress of Iraq*,⁴ 1920–

¹ League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, 21st Session, 1931, pp. 75–6.

² *ibid.* p. 78.

³ *ibid.* p. 225.

⁴ G.B., Colonial Office, *Iraq: Special Report by H.B.M.'s Government . . . to the Council of the League of Nations on the progress of Iraq during the period 1920–31* (London, H.M.S.O., 1931).

31, which was sent to the League in May 1931 and the Mandates Commission began to examine it in June. Sir Francis Humphrys, then British High Commissioner for Iraq, attended the meetings of the Mandates Commission and made a long and instructive statement in support of Iraq's ability to 'stand alone'. He concluded his statement by saying that Iraq is 'not free from imperfections', but if given independence and the opportunity for progress by admission to the League, she would fulfil the spirit and the 'high ideals with which the founders of the League were inspired'.¹

Following this statement, the Mandates Commission began to question Sir Francis in order to gain a more realistic picture of the political maturity of Iraq. M. Orts inquired about the future of minorities, and whether Iraq possessed that spirit of tolerance which was necessary for their existence. Sir Francis replied in the affirmative and said that the best answer to M. Orts's observation could be found in the *Special Report*.² Then Sir Francis added:

His Majesty's Government fully realized its responsibility in recommending that Iraq would be admitted to the League, which was, in its view, the only way of terminating the mandate. Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which had been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with His Majesty's Government, which would not attempt to transfer it to the Mandates Commission.³

The Mandates Commission, in the meantime, discussed the general conditions attained by Iraq which justified the claim that the country had reached the stage of development so as to be able to 'stand alone'. The investigations of the Mandates Commission were communicated to the Council of the League, and the Council adopted the following resolution at its meeting on 28 January 1932:⁴

The Council,

Having to consider the special case of the termination of the Mandate for Iraq;

(1) Notes the opinion formulated, at its request, by the Permanent Mandates Commission on the proposal of the British Government;

(2) Considers that the information available is sufficient to show that Iraq satisfies, generally speaking, the *de facto* conditions enumerated in the Annex to the Council resolution of 4 September 1931;

(3) Declares itself prepared, in principle, to pronounce the termination of the Mandatory regime in Iraq, when that State shall have entered into

¹ League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, 20th Session, 1931, p. 124.

² ibid. pp. 11-12.

³ ibid. p. 134.

⁴ League of Nations, *Official Journal* (March 1932) p. 474.

undertakings before the Council in conformity with the suggestions contained in the report of the Permanent Mandates Commission, it being understood that the right to apply to the Permanent Court of International Justice may only be exercised by Members of the League represented on the Council;

(4) Accordingly requests its rapporteurs for minorities questions, questions of international law and mandates, and the representative of the United Kingdom on the Council, to prepare, in consultation with the representative of the Iraqi Government, and, if necessary, with a representative of the Permanent Mandates Commission, a draft Declaration covering the various guarantees recommended in the report of the Permanent Mandates Commission, and to submit that draft to the Council at its next session;

(5) Decides that, should the Council, after examining the undertakings which would be entered into by the Iraq Government, pronounce the termination of the mandatory regime over that territory, such decision shall become effective only as from the date on which Iraq has been admitted to the League of Nations.

On 12 July 1932 General Nuri as-Sa'id, Prime Minister of Iraq, made a formal request that Iraq be admitted as a member of the League of Nations, and asked that his request be placed on the agenda of the League Assembly. In the Thirteenth Assembly the application of Iraq was first considered by a committee, and then approved by a unanimous vote of the Assembly on 3 October 1932. Iraq became the fifty-seventh member of the League of Nations and the third Middle East member.

GREAT BRITAIN'S RELATIONS WITH INDEPENDENT IRAQ

Great Britain's position in Iraq, which has been discussed in various sections of this work, can be rapidly summed up. Before the termination of the mandate, Britain's chief representative, the High Commissioner, was regarded, from the international viewpoint, as the supreme authority in Iraq. From the constitutional point of view, however, the King of Iraq, as the titular head of the national administration, was regarded as fully responsible. The High Commissioner, while 'he retained his responsibility to His Majesty's Government, and through them to the League of Nations, . . . exercised it in the form of advice' rendered 'to the King of Iraq, by which the latter undertook to be guided'. The position of the High Commissioner was accordingly that of 'an adviser and not of a controlling authority'.¹

¹ *Special Report . . . on the Progress of Iraq . . . 1920-31*, p. 22.

The terms 'advice' and 'authority' may at times have proved confusing. It is probably more consistent with the facts to argue that every new High Commissioner who went to Baghdad gradually became aware of the fact that he was sent merely to advise rather than to control.¹

Apart from the fact that the High Commissioner was assisted by his own staff, especially the Oriental Secretary,² he was also helped by British administrative officials in the service of the Iraqi Government who were 'called upon to keep the High Commissioner fully informed at all stages'. These officials, whose functions were advisory rather than executive, were paid by the Iraqi Government and made responsible to it. The advice they gave to Iraq continued throughout the period of tutelage, but gradually receded into the background by the time Iraq was approaching full self-government. 'By that time', stated the British *Special Report*, 'the great majority of the executive posts in the Administration were occupied by Iraqi officials, and for the period 1925-9 Iraqi effort may well claim a substantial share of the credit for the progress achieved'.

The advice of the British officials was probably not always fully appreciated by the Iraqi officials, and at times it was resented merely because it came from a foreign source. The British officials, aware of this, tried not to arouse suspicion and were instructed to refrain from exercising any direct control over the administration. As stated in the *Special Report*:³

They have endeavoured, in conformity with the policy of His Majesty's Government, to limit their advice to that which they would in any case have given if they had been the servants of a fully self-governing State. The result has been that their Iraqi colleagues have assumed to an increasing extent the real responsibility which must inevitably fall upon them when Iraq is admitted to membership of the League. Cases may have occurred where individuals have proved themselves unworthy of their responsibility: the highest ideals may not always have been reached; full advantage may not always have been taken of the disinterested advice which the British officials are no less ready to render than they were before; but that the

¹ Four High Commissioners served in Iraq during the period from the establishment of the national administration in 1921 to the termination of the Mandate in 1932: Sir Percy Cox, 1920-3; Sir Henry Dobbs, 1923-8; Sir Gilbert Clayton, (died on 11 September 1929); Sir Francis Humphrys, 1929-32 (after 1932 he became Great Britain's first Ambassador to Iraq).

² Two Oriental Secretaries served during the mandate period: Gertrude Bell, 1919-26 (died on 12 July 1926); Captain V. Holt, 1926-44.

³ *Special Report . . . on the Progress of Iraq . . . 1920-31*, pp. 29-30.

general stability of the administration has been maintained is beyond question, and if the blame for individual failures is to be laid to the door of the Iraqi nation, it is only right that they should be given their fair share of the credit for the general measure of success achieved.

After Iraq attained independence, Britain's position in Iraq was reduced merely to one of 'privilege' among other foreign countries in treaty relations with the new State. The privileges were partly defined in the Treaty of 30 June 1930, and were partly the legacy of Britain's stewardship and long connexions with Iraq. The non-juridical privileges, important though they have been, are hard to define with any precision and often led to confusion between the official policy of the British Foreign Office and the personal desires and activities of Britishers in the employment of the Iraqi Government.

Apart from the mutual obligations undertaken by Britain and Iraq as defined in the Treaty of Alliance,¹ Britain was granted in addition to the two air bases, 'the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes and means of communication', for the defence of imperial communications in Iraq.² Furthermore, all Iraq's requirements for war material and equipment were to be purchased from Great Britain, unless the latter was unable to supply them. 'In view of the desirability of identity in training and methods between the Iraqi and British armies, His Majesty the King of Iraq undertakes that, should he deem it necessary to have recourse to foreign military instructors, those shall be chosen from among British subjects.' Such arms and equipment 'shall not differ in type from those of the forces of His Britannic Majesty'. Further, military training of Iraqi personnel 'that may be sent abroad' should be undertaken in Great Britain.

In a separate note between the British and Iraqi Governments, at the time when the Treaty of 1930 was concluded, it was agreed that Britain would send an Advisory Military Mission to Iraq for the purpose of improving 'the efficiency' of the Iraqi 'land and air forces'. It was also agreed that the Iraqi Government 'will normally engage British subjects when in need of the services of foreign officials', but that when 'suitable British subjects are not available', the Iraqi Government will have freedom to engage non-British subjects. Finally, the British Representative in Iraq, as the first Ambassador in the country, would enjoy precedence which was to extend to his successors.

One important problem which gave rise to controversy was whether

¹ See p. 228, above.

² Articles 4 and 5 of the treaty.

British military help would be extended to Iraq in case of civil war or of armed conflict between the Government and one of the non-Arab minorities. The question was raised both in Iraq and in the British Parliament. Sir Francis Humphrys, at the time when the Treaty of 1930 was discussed, was of the opinion that Britain would help Iraq in times of internal disorder.¹ In England this question was raised both by Sir Samuel Hoare in Parliament on 23 July 1931,² and by Sir Henry Dobbs, a former British High Commissioner for Iraq, in a letter dated 26 September and published in *The Times* on 29 September 1932. The British Government declared that its forces in Iraq were not there 'for the purpose of putting down internal disturbances';³ and after a long debate the Prime Minister made a statement on 16 November 1932, in answer to a question raised in the House of Commons, in which he said:⁴

British forces are maintained in Iraq for no other purpose than those set out in Article 5 of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance of 30 June 1930, namely, to assist in the protection of British communications and to facilitate the discharge of obligations undertaken by this country under Article 4 of that Treaty. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have no obligations in regard to the maintenance of internal order in Iraq, the responsibility for which rests solely upon the Iraqi Government, as is expressly recognized in Article 5 of the Treaty. Were the Iraqi Government to ask at any time for assistance not contemplated by the Treaty of Alliance, the situation would have to be considered in the light of the various factors existing at the time.

In the light of subsequent events, three instances may be cited to test the validity of the British declaration with regard to non-intervention in domestic disorder. The first was the Assyrian uprising in 1933; the second, which was probably a more serious challenge to the central authority, was the Middle Euphrates uprising of 1935; and the third was the military coup d'état of 1936. In regard to the second, in an interview with the present writer, Lord Inverchapel (formerly Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, British Ambassador for Iraq) stated that the Iraqi Government asked in 1935 for the help of the British Royal Air Force to support the Iraqi army in putting down the tribal uprisings. He had declined to grant such help on the grounds that the Treaty of 1930 promised help only in case of foreign aggression.

¹ See a statement made by Sir Francis Humphrys to Amin Rihani in *Qalb al-Iraq* (Beirut, 1935) pp. 211-12.

² *Hansard* (Commons), 5th series, vol. 255, cols. 1784 ff.

³ *ibid.* col. 1827.

⁴ *ibid.* vol. 270, col. 1110.

In regard to the third, in 1936, it will be recalled, Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, though he sympathized with the Yasin Government, assumed a neutral attitude in the dispute between the lawful Government and the rebellious army led by Bakr Sidqi. In 1941 Britain's neutral attitude towards domestic troubles was no longer maintained. The circumstances and the events of the intervention have been fully discussed elsewhere, but it is significant to note that in this instance, in contrast to the earlier three, the attitude of the Iraqi Government had become hostile towards Great Britain, especially in time of war.

By relinquishing her mandate over Iraq, Great Britain achieved three ends. First, she safeguarded her fundamental imperial interests in Iraq by concluding a Treaty of Alliance on the basis of equality and mutual interests without undertaking any obligations towards an international organization as provided under the League mandates. Secondly, she put an end to Iraq's complaint that she was interfering in the domestic affairs of the country. Britain, perhaps, sought to win the good will of the Iraqis, and by assisting Iraq to win her independence in 1932 she was fully entitled to such good will. Her help was indeed fully appreciated by Faysal and the liberal nationalists, though the pan-Arabists continued to be critical of British policy towards the Arabs.

Finally, it was made evident that continued control or guidance of a people, from the viewpoint of the international administration of dependencies, may not be the best way for helping that people to learn how to govern themselves. Having safeguarded her fundamental interests, Britain, it seems, was quite satisfied to leave Iraq to learn the art of self-government from her own mistakes. Captain V. Holt, the Oriental Secretary of the British Embassy in Baghdad (1926–44) probably expressed the real sentiment of the British Government in a statement made to a correspondent of *Asia* in 1937.¹ The present writer, impressed by the statement, has written to Captain Holt to ascertain its validity. Captain Holt reaffirmed his opinion in a letter to the writer (7 March 1947), but rephrased it as follows:

The steady progress which Iraq has made since the termination of the Mandate in 1932 has strengthened me in my belief that the ability of any people to govern themselves does not, as many seem to think, develop in ratio to the length of the period during which they are under tutelage. On the contrary, prolonged tutelage weakens and ultimately destroys, the

¹ Albert Viton, 'Iraq: Study in Imperialism', *Asia*, vol. 38 (January 1938) p. 60.

qualities on which the capacity for self-government depends. The one way for any people to learn how to govern themselves is by the assumption of real responsibility for the management of their own affairs.

RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND SAUDI ARABIA

Relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia were by no means friendly from the time when the Iraqi Government was established, owing both to the periodic trans-frontier raids and to the rivalry between the Hashimi and Saudi dynasties.

The need for controlling the nomadic tribes which inhabit the vast open desert to the south of Iraq and used to wander between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, was, however, urgent. In 1922 the Treaty of Muhammarah was signed by representatives of Britain, the Najdi and Iraqi Governments. It provided for determining the nationality of the principal nomadic tribes of the desert lying on the borders of the two countries, guaranteed the safety of pilgrims, and established free commercial intercourse between the subjects of both Governments. In December of the same year a protocol to this treaty defining the frontier between Iraq and Najd was drawn up and signed by Iraqi and Najdi representatives at 'Uqair (on the Persian Gulf).

The next step was to put a stop to the tribal raids from both sides which caused trouble to both Governments. Various attempts were made to stop them, and in 1925 the Bahra Agreement was signed, which settled a number of outstanding issues concerning the treatment of migratory tribes crossing from the territory of one State into the other, and provided for the periodic meeting of a special joint tribunal to fix responsibility for raids and to assess damages. While this resulted in an initial measure of success in stopping tribal raids, a sudden occurrence of a series of savage raids into Iraq from Najd followed. King Abd al-Aziz Ibn Sa'ud objected to the establishment by the Iraqi Government of certain police posts in the southern desert area, which were construed to have been directed against Najdi interests. Negotiations followed between the Iraqi and Najdi representatives, but no agreement was come to on the question of police posts.

In 1930 the chief tribal opponent of King Ibn Sa'ud, Faysal ad-Dawish, was captured by the Iraqi police and handed over to Najd on an assurance that he was to be given humane treatment. The elimination of Faysal ad-Dawish, who had frequently trespassed over the Iraqi frontier, removed a great deal of misunderstanding

which had prevented a settlement of tribal raids between Iraq and Najd. Great Britain, in treaty relations with both these Arab States, offered her good offices for a final settlement. An arrangement for the meeting of the two Arab kings was made and took place on 22-24 February 1930 on board a British warship, the *Lupin*, in the Persian Gulf, in the presence of the British High Commissioner for Iraq. This meeting put an end to the hard feeling between the two families. The frontier police posts and certain other issues were settled by a friendly exchange of courtesies.¹ An exchange of notes followed and the signing of a *bon voisinage* agreement which settled all issues pending between the two countries.

From the time when Faysal and Ibn Sa'ud met in 1930 friendly relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia were established. Ibn Sa'ud, on his side, having consolidated his position in Arabia after his war with Yaman in 1934, embarked on a prototype 'good-neighbour' policy with his neighbours. In 1935 friendly visits were exchanged between Baghdad and Riyad for effecting a more intimate relation. This rapprochement was encouraged in certain Iraqi nationalist circles.² On 20 January 1936 Shaykh Yusuf Yasin, Ibn Sa'ud's secretary, arrived in Baghdad to negotiate an Iraqi-Sa'udi treaty. The Treaty of Arab Brotherhood and Alliance between Iraq and Saudi Arabia was officially signed in Baghdad on 2 April 1936.

The treaty provided for the peaceful settlement of disputes between the two countries (Article 2); neither one of them was to enter into an agreement with a third party 'over any matter whatever of a nature prejudicial to the interests of the other . . . or of a nature calculated to expose to danger or harm the safety or interests of his country' (Article 1); and both countries, in case of a dispute between either one of them and a third party, 'shall jointly endeavour to settle such disputes by peaceful means' (Article 3). In case either country were to fall a victim to aggression, the two parties 'shall consult together regarding the measures which shall be taken with the object of concerting their efforts in a useful manner to repel the said aggression' (Article 4). In case of domestic disorder, each country was to help the other by taking certain measures against the insurgents (Article 5). The treaty stressed the necessity of co-operating in cultural, educational, and military matters 'with a view to unifying the Islamic and Arab cultures and the military systems of their two countries by

¹ Amin Rihani, *Faysal al-Awwal* (Beirut, 1934) pp. 168-70.

² See a leading article in *al-Islah*, Baghdad, 22 June 1935.

means of the exchange of educational and military missions' (Article 7). In the event of one of the two not being represented in a foreign country, the other party may, if requested, 'undertake the representation of the interests of the other' party where she may have no diplomatic or consular representative (Article 8). The treaty does not apply, and is even to be renounced, if either party should commit an act of aggression against a third party (Article 10). Iraq's obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, were reserved (Article 9). Certain other technical matters were also dealt with either in the treaty or in a subsidiary protocol.

The Yaman was invited to adhere to the treaty, and though the Imam Yahya, King of Yaman, hesitated at first, he finally signed it on 29 April 1937.

One of the significant features of the treaty was its emphasis on religion and Arab kinship. Both in the Preamble and Article 6 the Arabic and religious ties were stressed. The religious emphasis was to satisfy the Wahhabi puritan State, and the national character to fit in with the pattern of the Iraqi national State. These two ties, however, were regarded as complementary rather than as contradictory features of the two Arab States.¹

THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE BETWEEN IRAQ AND PERSIA

The boundary dispute between Iraq and Persia over the Shatt al-Arab may be regarded as a legacy of the Ottoman Empire which Iraq, as a successor State, had inherited. From the time when Sultan Selim I (1516–20) had extended Ottoman sovereignty to the East, Iraq became the field of an intermittent dispute between Ottoman sultans and Persian shahs. The basis for a settlement between the two Islamic States had been finally laid down in the Treaty of Erzerum (31 May 1847). The demarcation of the boundaries, however, which was to have taken place immediately afterwards, was three times delayed (although Turkey and Persia remained at peace with each other) by wars in Europe, mainly owing to the conflicting interests of Great Britain and Russia.

The frontier between Persia and the Ottoman Empire, on the Ottoman side, was divided after the First World War between Iraq and Turkey, as successor States. The northern section, between Turkey and Persia, was the subject of controversy which was settled

¹ Cf. Razzuq Ghannam's comments in *al-Iraq*, Baghdad, 8 April 1936.

by an agreement on 23 January 1932.¹ The southern section, between Iraq and Persia, had given rise to controversies which culminated in an appeal by the Iraqi Government to the Council of the League of Nations in 1934. In a memorandum which the Iraqi Government had submitted to the League Council, a number of incidents were adduced which were regarded as legal irregularities and prompted the Iraqi Government, after failure to achieve redress by direct negotiations, to appeal to the League of Nations.² The Iraqi appeal, made in the form of a request under Article 11 (para. 2)³ of the League Covenant, was presented in a note to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations on 29 November 1934.⁴ The Government of Persia gave its consent to the submission of the dispute on 23 December 1934.

While Persia denied the legal validity of the frontier from Qurnah to Shatt al-Arab, her specific claim was to modify the frontier to coincide with the Thalweg line of Shatt al-Arab. The whole of the waters of the Shatt al-Arab, from shore to shore, were under the control of Iraq, but her exclusive sovereignty was disputed by the Government of Persia. The Iraqi Government, as part of its juridical inheritance of the Ottoman Empire, based its claim on a number of international agreements which the Ottoman Empire had concluded. The first of these documents was the Treaty of Erzerum, concluded between Persia and the Ottoman Empire on 31 May 1847, and ratified on 21 March 1848. General Nuri as-Sa'id, Foreign Minister of Iraq, declared at the Council of the League of Nations on 14 January 1935, that Articles 2 and 3 of the Erzerum Treaty established Ottoman (and consequently Iraqi) sovereignty over the whole of the Shatt al-Arab. The third paragraph of Article 2 implicitly stipulated the left bank of Shatt al-Arab, and not the thalweg, as the southern frontier of Persia. The text of Article 2 follows:

The Ottoman Government formally recognizes the unrestricted sovereignty

¹ The Turco-Persian settlement of 1932 was based on an exchange of territories in which Persia ceded to Turkey, in return for an equivalent Turkish territory, the Little Ararat, a mountain which had served as an asylum in Persia for Kurdish nationalists who opposed Turkish policy.

² For text of the memorandum, see League of Nations, *Official Journal* (February 1935) p. 208.

³ Article 11, para. 2, states: 'It is also declared to be the friendly right of each member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or the Council any circumstance whatever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.'

⁴ For text of the letter, see League of Nations, *Official Journal* (February 1935) pp. 196-7.

of the Persian Government over the city of Muhammara, the island of Khizr, the anchorage, and the land on the eastern bank—that is to say, the left bank—of the Shatt al-Arab, which are in the possession of tribes recognized as belonging to Persia. Further, Persian vessels shall have the right to navigate freely without let or hindrance on the Shatt al-Arab from the south of the same to the point of contact of the frontiers of the two Parties.

In stating Iraq's case before the League Council on 14 January 1935, General Nuri asserted that both equity and treaty rights supported the Iraqi Government point of view. He said:¹

On the general question of equity, the Iraqi Government feels that it is Iraq and not Persia that has grounds for complaint. Persia has a coast-line of almost two thousand kilometres, with many ports and anchorages. In the Khor Musa, only fifty kilometres away to the east of the Shatt al-Arab, Persia possesses a deep-water harbour penetrating far into Persian territory, where she has already constructed the terminus of the Trans-Persian Railway. Iraq is essentially the land of the two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris. The Shatt al-Arab, formed by their junction, constitutes Iraq's only access to the sea; it requires constant attention if it is to be kept fit for navigation by modern shipping, and Basrah, 100 kilometres from the mouth, is Iraq's only port. It is highly undesirable, from Iraq's point of view, that another Power should command this channel from one bank. Iraq is not asking that the frontier should be altered, but I make these remarks to show that this is not because the existing line is unduly to its advantage.

General Nuri's claim was not only based on the Erzerum Treaty of 1847, but also on the Tehran Protocol of 21 December 1911, which provided the formation of a four-Power joint commission to draw up the frontiers. The Tehran Protocol was supplemented by the Constantinople Protocol of 4 November (Western calendar 17th) 1913, providing for further specification of the delimitation. The work was to be completed by the four-Power commission of 1914, which was to execute the terms of the Constantinople Protocol of 1913, which was concluded between Persia, the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, and Russia.

This document [stated General Nuri]² defines the boundary in some detail, mainly by reference to geographical features, and provides for a Delimitation Commission consisting of representatives of each of the signatory Powers with power to the two mediating Commissioners to decide finally on disputed questions. . . . The Delimitation Commission was duly constituted, as provided by the Protocol of Constantinople, and proceeded in

¹ League of Nations, *Official Journal* (February 1935) pp. 113–14.

² *ibid.* pp. 115–16.

due course to the Persian Gulf. For nine months—from January to October 1914—the Commission proceeded with the most painstaking care to delimit and mark the frontier on the spot. The records of the Commission show the thoroughness and impartiality with which they considered every question raised, and, incidentally, they show the constant appeals that were made, particularly by the Persian delegate, to the Treaty of Erzerum as the basis of the boundary. The Commission completed the whole of its work, except for one small sector north of Mount Dalampar and therefore outside the area with which we are concerned. I desire to emphasize that the task of the Commission was an extremely difficult and arduous one, performed with the greatest care and ability, and that as a result of its labours the whole of the boundary between Persia and Iraq was marked out by frontier-posts and precise indications on large-scale maps. It is this clear and well-considered boundary which my Government wishes to see respected as the frontier between the two countries.

In his memorandum of 8 January 1935 the Persian Foreign Minister, Mirza Sayyid Baqir Khan, stated the Persian case as follows:¹

According to the Government of Iraq, the boundary was fixed by the Treaty of Erzerum of 1847 and by the Protocol signed at Constantinople on 4 November 1913. . . . The Persian Government . . . is of the opinion that the Treaty of Erzerum, the Protocol of Constantinople of 1913, and consequently the delimitation effected by the Delimitation Commission of 1914, have no force, either in law or in equity, to determine the frontier. . . . Negotiations, which were conducted under the pressing mediation of the two Great Powers [Great Britain and Russia], had been lengthy and difficult, lasting for years. The two Contracting Parties were thus obliged to insert a provision to the effect 'that, when the texts of this Treaty have been exchanged, they will accept and sign the same, and that the ratifications thereof shall be exchanged within the space of two months, or earlier' (Article 9).

The Sublime Porte asked for an interpretation, which the Ambassadors gave in an explanatory note (14–26 April 1847) . . . on the understanding, wrote the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs in his reply to the Powers, 'that the Court of Persia will accept the assurances which have been given by the representatives of the two mediating Courts to the effect that it will raise no claim going counter to those assurances, and on the further understanding that, in the event of any such claim being raised, the Treaty will be deemed to be null and void.'

When the Persian representative appeared in Constantinople, the Powers requested him to include the explanatory note in his ratifica-

¹ For text of the memorandum see League of Nations, *Official Journal* (February 1935) pp. 217–22.

tion. To accept that note, which was added to the Convention of nine articles as a supplementary treaty, was to exceed his instructions and his powers. None the less, at the urgent request of the Porte, he took upon himself to give to the explanatory note, in the form of a ratification, an acceptance which required the signature of the Head of the State; though at the same time he carefully made it clear that his powers did not extend so far, and that his declaration was a purely personal one. The treaty, which was to be 'accepted, signed and ratified' (Article 9), was thus ratified without having been accepted. Since the acceptance of the explanatory note was the essential condition of the establishment of the contract, which would otherwise be 'null and void' according to the Ottoman declaration, that instrument, on which the Royal Government [of Iraq] now seeks to base its case, is, as was stated in the Ottoman note, 'null and void'.

The Persian memorandum, in fact, analyses the circumstances and provisions of the 1913 and 1914 agreements only to declare them 'null and void', and to state that they had effected departures from the '*status quo* of 1848', which had caused a considerable alteration of the territorial position which, according to the Persian constitution, required the approval of the Persian Parliament. The Constantinople Protocol was from the beginning not approved by Parliament and hence 'the condition essential for its validity . . . is lacking'. Having thus declared both the Erzerum Treaty and the agreements of 1913 and 1914 'null and void', the Persian memorandum summed up the discussion as follows:

Hence it must be concluded that the 1913 Protocol and the 1914 delimitation relied on by the Iraqi Government must be deliberately rejected. They must be rejected, (1) because they take as starting-point a treaty which was itself non-existent at the time when the Tehran Agreement of 1911 referred to it; (2) because, in concluding the 1913 Protocol, which already gravely departs from the provisions and stipulations of the Tehran Agreement of 1911 providing for arbitration in case of disagreement, all the rules of the mediation procedure, the main features of which had just been fixed at The Hague in agreements signed by all the Parties, were openly disregarded; (3) because, on the pretext of a treaty between Persia and the Ottoman Empire, an agreement was in reality concluded between Great Britain and Russia, accompanied on the Shatt-al-Arab by a direct agreement concluded in London between Great Britain and the Sublime Porte and by the improper conclusion of a bilateral understanding in the British capital in the middle of negotiations which were to take place at Constanti-

nople between all the Parties; (4) because, lastly, one of the Parties, the Ottoman Empire, immediately failed to carry out, in a great many respects, the Act of 1913 fixing the frontier—a failure which, even if partial, involved the total lapse of the Act owing to its indivisible character.

On 15 January 1935 the Persian Foreign Minister, Mirza Sayyid Baqir Kazimi, stated his country's case at the Council of the League of Nations, summarizing the foregoing memorandum, but emphasizing the 'substantial differences between the two lines—the Erzerum line of 1848 and the Constantinople line of 1913', as follows:¹

The Treaty of Erzerum does not say a word about giving to the Porte the whole of the Shatt al-Arab, in full sovereignty, as far as low-water mark on the Persian bank. It does not fix in direct, clear and categorical terms the frontier on the bank beyond the waters of the river; yet this should have been made quite explicit, in absolute and formal terms, if the intention were to depart from the fundamental principle of the equal sovereignty of the two riparians as far as the middle of the river. On the other hand, after having been careful to conclude with the Porte on the same day a Convention which in practice placed the administration of the river under her authority, although she was not a riparian, Great Britain did not hesitate, by a declaration dated 29 July 1913, to remove the frontier expressly to the further bank. This declaration, for which she undertook to secure the acceptance of Persia, which, in this matter, was not a free agent, was simply introduced into the Constantinople Protocol, of which it formed the essential text as regards the southern frontier.

Meanwhile direct negotiations were resumed and a League rapporteur, Baron Aloisi, tried to reconcile the points of view of the two Governments. At first Baron Aloisi suggested the internationalization of Shatt al-Arab, which was acceptable neither to Iraq nor to Persia. The resumption of direct negotiations marked a turn for the better. The scene shifted from Geneva to Tehran, and General Nuri continued direct negotiation with the Persian Government. When the negotiations reached a final stage where they had almost broken down, the Shah himself gave further encouragement by declaring to General Nuri that he wanted nothing more from Iraq than the thalweg of the Shatt in front of Abadan. This meant that Iraq would retain her sovereignty over the whole of Shatt al-Arab except a few kilometres of the Abadan area, and General Nuri accepted this compromise as a basis for further discussion.

It would probably be superfluous to discuss the legal basis of the settlement, since the agreement of the Iraqi Government to surrender

¹ League of Nations, *Official Journal* (February 1935) pp. 118–19.

part of her sovereignty over Shatt al-Arab was made on political rather than legal grounds.¹ Complications in the international situation greatly affected a speedy settlement with the object of bringing these two Middle East countries, together with Turkey and Afghanistan, to form a Middle Eastern Pact. This was prompted by Mussolini's successful move in 1935 and his occupation of Abyssinia, which undermined both the prestige of the League of Nations and the principle of collective security. In the Middle East, as indeed in Western Europe, there was a revival of the old diplomacy of alliances and pacts, which were resorted to as a measure of security against aggression. Turkey, as an important eastern Mediterranean country, was the first to feel the danger of Mussolini's threat in the East, and, therefore, suggested that Persia and Iraq should speedily settle their differences in order to discuss the larger problem of regional security for the Middle East. President Atatürk cabled a personal friendly message to Iraq and Persia expressing the hope of a satisfactory agreement. Thus, in the words of Dr Arnold J. Toynbee, 'it was not the diplomatic action of the League Council's Italian rapporteur Baron Aloisi in Europe, but the military action of Baron Aloisi's master in Africa, that brought the two Middle Eastern disputants to reason'.²

While negotiations were going on between Iraq and Persia, the first Iraqi military coup d'état took place in 1936; though it caused a change in the personnel of the Iraqi negotiator, it did not affect the course of actual negotiations. General Nuri was replaced by Dr Naji al-Asil, the new Iraqi Foreign Minister, who not only carried the negotiations to a final settlement, but also continued discussion of a Four-Power Middle Eastern Pact, known as the Sa'dabad Pact. The new boundary treaty between Iraq and Persia was signed in Tehran on 4 July 1937. The treaty stipulated that both the Constantinople Protocol of 1913 and the *procès verbal* of the Delimitation Commission of 1914 were valid instruments as basis for the delimitation of the frontiers between Iraq and Persia (Article 1). It also stipulated that the frontiers between Iraq and Persia would run along Shatt al-Arab on its left bank, except for the section of eight kilometres in front of Abadan where the frontiers would be the thalweg or the mid-channel of Shatt al-Arab (Article 2).

¹ See Fuad K. Mufarrij, *The Iraqi-Persian Frontier Dispute in International Law* (Beirut, 1935).

² *Survey of International Affairs* 1936, p. 801.

THE SA'DABAD PACT

The idea of extending a type of Balkan Security Pact to the Middle East regions came from Turkey, prompted by Mussolini's threat to the eastern Mediterranean. Preliminary negotiations for the pact were initiated in Geneva in September 1935, between the Turkish and Persian accredited representatives to the League of Nations, and a draft pact was initialed on 2 October 1935.

It remained for the two most powerful Middle East States, Turkey and Persia, to enlist the co-operation of other States in order to complete the structure of a regional security pact comprising the independent Middle Eastern countries. In January 1936 the Afghan Foreign Minister was entertained by Dr Rüştü Aras, the Turkish Foreign Minister, at a banquet in Ankara, and the first public reference to a Middle Eastern Pact was made. From January to July negotiations were conducted between Turkey and Persia on the one hand, and between Persia and Iraq on the other, to settle certain frontier matters before the pact was signed. The Iraqi-Persian dispute, it will be recalled, was withdrawn from the League Council, and a boundary treaty was finally concluded in Tehran on 4 July 1937.

At the time that the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Persia signed the boundary treaty in Tehran, they were joined by the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Afghanistan and signed at Sa'dabad a Four-Power Middle Eastern Pact on 8 July 1937. The Sa'dabad Pact provided for consultation among the four Powers in all disputes that might touch their common interests (Article 3); for regarding their common frontiers as inviolable (Article 2); and for abstaining from interference in the domestic affairs of each country (Articles 1, 7). Article 4 stipulated that the four Powers should not 'resort, whether singly or jointly with one or more third Powers, to any act of aggression directed against any other of the Contracting Parties'. It was also agreed to bring any violation of Article 4 to the Council of the League of Nations (Article 5). An act of aggression by one of the contracting parties would entitle the others to denounce the pact in respect of the party in question (Article 6). The pact was to be in force for five years in the first instance, and it was to remain in force for a second term of the same length in respect of any of the parties that had not given six months' notice of denunciation before the expiry of the first five years (Article 10). In a separate protocol, which was signed on the same day, the four Powers agreed to set up a

Permanent Council, which was to meet at least once a year, and a Secretariat of its own. The Council met only once, when the four Foreign Ministers were still in Tehran, but never again. At that first meeting a resolution was adopted which provided the support of the four Powers for Persia's application (and then that of each other member in alphabetical order) for election to the seat in the Council of the League of Nations which was then held by Turkey, but was due to be vacated by her at the forthcoming meeting in September. It was also decided to hold the next meeting at Kabul, Afghanistan, but this never took place.

The Sa'dabad Pact, like its counterpart the Balkan Pact, hardly meant anything more than a pious declaration of good will on the part of its signatories, since it failed to provide any solidarity among its members. Regarded from another angle, it is to be noted that the Power which had expected great returns from her initiation of, and participation in, the pact was under direct threat from another direction. Turkey, whose territory was long coveted by Mussolini, was not afraid of England or Russia; she rather sought to consolidate her position against the Axis Powers. If Turkey were able to influence her partners, the pact would have been an asset both to Britain and Russia rather than a liability. Failure to create solidarity proved that the weakness of the pact came from within rather than from foreign opposition.

IRAQ AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

From the time that the Treaty of 1930 came into force in 1932, the foreign policy of Iraq seems to have been fairly consistent with British foreign policy.¹ There were, it is true, forces within Iraq which urged an independent foreign policy dictated by Iraq's own interests. These forces, it will be recalled, had become increasingly influential in the orientation of Iraq's foreign policy when the Second World War broke out in 1939. A full discussion of the consequences, which culminated in the thirty-days' war between Britain and Iraq, was given in Chapter IX.

After the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime, the coming into power of the moderate nationalists gradually led to the reorientation of

¹ Certain advocates of close Anglo-Iraqi collaboration went so far as to declare that the Treaty of 1930 was the only guarantee for the independence of Iraq. See a statement to this effect made by Rustum Haydar in 1937 in Parliament, *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 8th Session, 1937, p. 304.

Iraq's foreign policy, in line with British foreign policy. The Midfa'i Cabinet, which was formed in June 1941 after Rashid Ali's flight, tried at first to restore order and then broke off diplomatic relations with the Axis Powers. On 9 October 1941 General Nuri as-Sa'id, the leading protagonist of Anglo-Iraqi co-operation, was returned to power and punished those who took active part in causing the rupture of relations with Great Britain. Further, General Nuri's Government sought collaboration with the countries fighting the Axis Powers which had signed the Declaration of the United Nations (1 January 1942). General Nuri, it will be recalled, who advocated the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States in 1940, selected Ali Jawdat, former Prime Minister, as Iraq's first Minister to the United States. Friendly relations with China were established by concluding a Treaty of Amity and Friendship between Iraq and the Chinese Republic (16 March 1942).

The restoration of the constitutional regime not only brought about understanding with Britain, but also a genuine desire to grant her all facilities for the prosecution of the war against the Axis Powers. From Iraq a British force was able to invade the Levant in June 1941, in collaboration with the British and Free French forces which launched their attack from Palestine. When Germany attacked Russia, General Quinan was instructed to prepare for the defence of Iraq against a possible German advance through Turkey or Persia. In August 1941, General Quinan entered Persia as part of an Anglo-Soviet move to eliminate German influence in Persia. By the end of 1941 considerable forces were concentrated in Iraq and Persia, which were to check the Nazi forces in case they broke into the Middle East by way of Turkey or the Caucasus. All facilities of transport and local products were supplied by Iraq in order to help Britain's war effort against Germany.¹ In 1942 a unified command for Iraq and Persia was formed under General Sir H. Maitland Wilson, who was made directly responsible to the War Office. In addition to his primary task of fighting the Germans in case they broke through the Caucasus, General Wilson was instructed first, to secure the safety of oil-fields in Iraq and Persia; and secondly, to transport supplies from the Persian Gulf to Russia.²

¹ For a statement of Iraq's war efforts see the account given by Salman ash-Shaykh Da'ud in *al-Akhbar*, 17 January 1945; and by Shaykh Muhammad Rida ash-Shabibi in *az-Zaman*, 10 and 18 January 1948.

² See Field-Marshal Lord Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas* (London, Hutchinson, 1948) pp. 135-47.

Finally, the Iraqi Government moved a step farther in her collaboration with Britain by declaring war on the Axis Powers on 16–17 January 1943. The initiative came from the Iraqi Government itself. On 12 November 1942 a discussion was initiated by a number of deputies in Parliament regarding the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations, which prompted thirty-two deputies to submit a proposal to the Government to ‘adhere to the principles of the Atlantic Charter in order that she [Iraq] shall take her proper place at the Peace Conference’.¹ On 16 January 1943 Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa‘id, in response to this proposal, made a statement in Parliament in which he declared that adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations required a formal declaration of war on Axis Powers.² On 11 January General Nuri submitted a memorandum to the Council of Ministers in which he denounced the inimical attitude of the Axis Powers to Iraq. He said:

The most obvious proof of the wicked intentions of those Powers towards Iraq is what they have done and are still doing in spreading false rumours about this country and intriguing against her, and by the continuous attacks directed by their broadcasting stations against the noble House of Hashim and by abusing every person who may be legitimately in power in Iraq. By all this they hope to persuade Iraq to disavow her legal pledges contained in the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of Alliance.³

‘It was the duty of Iraq’, continued General Nuri, ‘to stand by the side of her ally Great Britain and her Allies ever since the declaration of this war. But she was unable to do so as she was engaged in fighting Axis intrigues in her own country.’ General Nuri argued that it was in Iraq’s own interests to ‘support any policy which tends to ensure the freedom of peoples and resist aggression’. The Council of Ministers passed a resolution declaring war on the Axis Powers as from midnight of 16–17 January 1943. The Regent issued a decree on 13 January declaring a state of war with Germany, Italy, and Japan; and Parliament, at its meeting on 20 January 1943, unanimously approved the decree.⁴ Germany, Italy, and Japan were informed of Iraq’s decision through the representatives of the protecting Powers,

¹ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1943, pp. 10–11, 15–22.

² *ibid.* p. 65.

³ For text of General Nuri’s memorandum see Iraq Government, *Documents relating to the Adherence of Iraq to the Declaration of the United Nations* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1943) pp. 2–7.

⁴ *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1943, pp. 74–8, 79.

the Turkish Minister for Italy and Japan, and the Swiss Consul for Germany. It was thus that Iraq formally became a belligerent Power. She subscribed to the declaration of the United Nations, signed at Washington on 1 January 1942, as the twenty-seventh member.

On the news of Iraq's declaration of war on the Axis Powers (the first independent Middle Eastern country to join the war on the side of Great Britain), Mr Churchill sent the following message to General Nuri as-Sa'id, Prime Minister of Iraq, on 16 January 1943:¹

The news of the declaration of war by Iraq has been welcomed in this country. It has given us special satisfaction to realize that the State which we helped to create during the First World War will henceforth participate with us in the present struggle.

When His Majesty's Government first accepted responsibility for guiding the future of the new Kingdom of Iraq, they made her complete and early independence their goal. That goal was reached ten years ago, and since then the enemies of our two countries have spared no efforts to disturb our friendly relations. They have been lavish with falsehood, and have even resorted to force. But they could achieve no lasting success.

The Iraqi Parliament, by the free and independent exercise of their constitutional powers, have now on their own initiative decided to show the world Iraq's adherence to the aims and ideals of the United Nations, and her fundamental opposition to the dark forces which seek to enslave humanity.

The struggle will be hard, but the end is sure, and we rejoice to have you at our side.

IRAQ AND THE ARAB LEAGUE

The Arabs of Iraq, as indeed most of the Arabs throughout the Middle East, aspired to form some kind of union, and this movement came to be known as pan-Arabism. They argue that since the Arab countries are bound by common aspirations and by a community of interests—geography, history, and culture—they are entitled to form a union. During the period between the two world wars the Arabs were too much preoccupied in their struggle with the European Powers to achieve unity; but during and after the Second World War they made certain strides in the movement of unity which culminated in the establishment of the Arab League.

Great interest in Arab unity was aroused both in Iraq and the other Arab countries when Great Britain declared, to the satisfaction of the moderate nationalists, her 'full support of any scheme [of unity]

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *Onwards to Victory: the Fourth Volume of War Speeches*, compiled by Charles Eade (London, Cassell, 1944) p. 30.

that commands general approval'. Great Britain's promise was given by Mr Anthony Eden in his Mansion House speech on 29 May 1941, when the Rashid Ali movement had just collapsed in Iraq. His statement is of particular interest to the Arabs and deserves to be quoted in full:¹

This country has a long tradition of friendship with the Arabs, a friendship that has been proved by deeds, not words alone. We have countless well-wishers among them, as they have many friends here. Some days ago I said in the House of Commons that His Majesty's Government had great sympathy with Syrian aspirations for independence. I should like to repeat that now. But I would go further. The Arab world has made great strides since the settlement reached at the end of the last war, and many Arab thinkers desire for the Arab peoples a greater degree of unity than they now enjoy. In reaching out towards this unity they hope for our support. No such appeal from our friends should go unanswered. It seems to me both natural and right that the cultural and economic ties between the Arab countries and the political ties, too, should be strengthened. His Majesty's Government for their part will give their full support to any scheme that commands general approval.

In the autumn of 1941 General Nuri as-Sa'id returned to power in Baghdad after the collapse of the Rashid Ali regime. General Nuri, it will be recalled, advocated co-operation with the democratic Powers and opposed the drift of the extremists towards the Axis. He resumed negotiations with the British authorities on Middle East affairs and advocated Arab union which would include Syria.

Early in 1942 General Nuri paid a visit to Cairo and had conversations with Mr R. G. Casey, Great Britain's Minister of State for the Middle East, with whom he discussed Arab problems. Since France had ceased to be a decisive factor in Middle East politics, General Nuri contended, it rested with Great Britain to support the Arabs in realizing their national aspirations (namely, the unity and independence of the Arab countries). General Nuri, it seems, was requested to put on record his general proposals for Arab unity which, after his return to Baghdad, he submitted in a note to Mr Casey. General Nuri's proposals may be summarized as follows:²

1. Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan to be reunited to constitute one State.
2. The people of that State to decide its form of government,

¹ *The Times*, 30 May 1941.

² General Nuri as-Sa'id, *Arab Independence and Unity* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1943) pp. 11-12.

whether they have a monarchical or republican regime, or whether it be a unitary or federal State.

3. An Arab League to be formed; Iraq and Syria to join at once, the other Arab States to join if and when they desire.

4. The Arab League to have a permanent Council nominated by the member States and presided over by one of the rulers of the States, to be chosen in a manner acceptable to the States concerned.

5. The Arab Council to be responsible for: (a) defence, (b) foreign affairs, (c) currency, (d) communications, (e) customs, and (f) protection of minority rights.

6. The Jews in Palestine to have semi-autonomy, and the rights to their own rural and urban district administration including schools, health institutes, and police, subject to general supervision to the Syrian State and under international guarantee.

7. Jerusalem, a city to which members of all religions must have free access for pilgrimage and worship, to have a special commission composed of the three theocratic religions to ensure this result.

The new circumstances of the Second World War made Egypt, which had taken in the past an independent course in the fulfilment of her national aspirations, realize that it would be advantageous if she led a bloc of several Arab States in the post-war period. Nahhas Pasha, then Prime Minister of Egypt, may have been encouraged by Great Britain to take the leadership of Arab unity; but Egypt is certainly the leading country in the Arab world, economically and culturally, and her political leadership was welcomed by the Arabs. When General Nuri's scheme for Arab unity was submitted to Nahhas Pasha it was given lukewarm support. For this reason his proposals (including Amir Abd-Allah's Greater Syria scheme) only resulted in a more loose, or confederate, union comprising not only the countries of the Fertile Crescent, but also Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yaman.

Prime Minister Nahhas Pasha began to discuss the scheme of Arab unity by inviting the various Arab Governments to send their representatives to Cairo in order to sound their several official opinions. The first Arab country to respond to his invitations was Iraq. General Nuri went in person to Cairo and his conversations with Nahhas Pasha lasted from 31 July to 5 August 1943. These conversations were merely 'an exchange of personal views on the project', as General Nuri declared in the Senate upon his return to Baghdad, but agreement on general principles was reached. The representatives of the

other Arab countries followed Iraq and the conversations were completed by January 1944.

On 25 September 1944 a Preparatory Committee, composed of the delegates of the Arab States, met in Alexandria to discuss the various proposals set forth in the preliminary talks with a view to working out a scheme of unity acceptable to all the delegates. Before the meeting there was a widely held opinion that an Arab conference without a Palestinian delegate was 'a contradiction in terms'. An invitation was accordingly extended to Palestine to send a representative. Musa al-Alami was the selected representative of the various Arab parties in Palestine; and he presented the Palestine case before the Preparatory Committee.

In his opening speech, Nahhas Pasha outlined the work of the Preparatory Committee and declared that the delegates were first to be asked to outline their views on the Arab unity scheme as already stated during the preliminary conversations. The Committee was then to proceed to work out a general scheme which would be acceptable to all.

At the outset it was realized that full union, with a central executive authority, was impossible at this stage of development of Arab nationalism. Some of the Arab States asserted their independence, but others were not prepared to renounce their sovereignty in favour of a full union. Only Syria stood for full-fledged Arab unity and was quite prepared to renounce her sovereignty in favour of a central executive authority. Prime Minister Sa'd-Allah al-Jabiri, the Syrian delegate, expressed the attitude of his Government in his speech at the opening session by quoting a statement made by Shukri al-Quwatli, President of the Syrian Republic, that 'Syria will never allow a flag higher than her own to be raised in her sky save that of Arab unity'. Iraq and Transjordan were not in favour of full unity, but advocated union on a federal basis. Lebanon, while asserting her independence, pledged co-operation with the other Arab countries. Her attitude, as stated by Prime Minister Riyad as-Sulh in his speech at the opening session, was as follows: 'Lebanon has pledged herself never to be a seat of imperialism, or a channel for the colonization of her sister Arab countries.' Saudi Arabia and Yaman reluctantly agreed to join a loose association of independent Arab States. Finally Egypt, who took the role of the mediator, did not advocate any definite plan of unity, but Nahhas Pasha declared that his Government was prepared to go along the path of Arab unity as far as the

other Arab Governments were jointly prepared to go. Thus the more idealistic proposals were dropped, and in practice only those proposals which were of practical value were finally adopted. The form of unity acceptable to all had to be in the nature of loose federation in order to satisfy both local and dynastic interests.

At the sixth meeting of the Preparatory Committee, on 4 October 1944, the problem of Syrian unity was fully discussed. Amir Abd-Allah, ruler of Transjordan, had already advocated the so-called 'Greater Syria' scheme and endeavoured to carry it out within the larger Arab unity project. General Nuri, it will be recalled, had incorporated the 'Greater Syria' plan in his note to Mr Casey, in which he proposed to unite Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan to constitute one State. At this juncture this plan was fully and frankly discussed by the Preparatory Committee. The Syrian and Transjordan delegates unhesitatingly welcomed the proposal. But it was understood that Transjordan welcomed the plan only on condition that her ruler, Amir Abd-Allah, would be the King of the new State. Jamil Mardam, the Syrian delegate, declared that while Syria supported the project, she preferred to maintain her republican regime. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was not in favour of Syrian unity with Transjordan, fearing an extension of Amir Abd-Allah's authority to Damascus. Lebanon, too, was not prepared to join such a union, while Palestine's position was complicated by the Zionist claims. The 'Greater Syria' scheme was thus received with mixed feelings by the Preparatory Committee and dismissed as premature in the circumstances.

Finally, the problem of Palestine was carefully examined. Though it was not an independent Arab country, Palestine was represented by Musa al-Alami (chosen by the various Arab parties in Palestine) who stated his country's case before the Preparatory Committee. Al-Alami stressed the gravity of the Arab situation in Palestine, due mainly to the continual flow of Jewish immigrants and to the sale of Arab land to Jewish owners. He pointed out, likewise, that the Arabs of Palestine were prepared to accept the proposals of the White Paper of 1939, which Great Britain had declared to be binding, as a basis for the settlement of the Palestine problem. Alami proposed, in the first place, to establish a fund with a view to developing Arab-owned lands in Palestine and thus to make it unnecessary for the Arabs to sell to the Jews. In the second place, he proposed to set up Arab bureaux in London and Washington in order to present the Arab case

concerning Palestine to the English and American public. Alami's statement of the Arab situation in Palestine was so impressive that the Preparatory Committee at once approved his proposals.

On 7 October 1944 a Protocol was signed by all the members of the Preparatory Committee except Saudi Arabia and Yaman.¹ The Alexandria Protocol provided for the establishment of a League of Arab States, composed of the independent Arab States which desired to join the new organization. The League would be governed by a council called The Council of the League of Arab States, whose membership would be based on the sovereign equality of the member States. The purpose of the League would be:

... to execute agreements reached between member-States, to hold periodic meetings which will strengthen the relations between those States; to co-ordinate their political plans so as to ensure their co-operation, and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty against any aggression by suitable means; and to supervise in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.

Members of the League might not pursue foreign policies harmful to the policy of the League or to any one of its members. The independence of Lebanon within her present frontiers was also confirmed. Regarding Palestine, the Protocol stated:

The Committee is of the opinion that Palestine constitutes an important part of the Arab world and that the rights of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be touched without danger to the peace and stability of the Arab world. Furthermore, the Committee is of the opinion that the engagements entered into by Great Britain involving the cessation of Jewish immigration, the safeguarding of lands belonging to the Arabs, and the progress of Palestine towards independence constitute rights acquired by the Arabs and that their execution will be a step towards the desired goal and the return of peace and stability.

While recognizing the horrors of persecution undergone by the Jews in Europe, the Preparatory Committee declared that 'nothing would be more arbitrary or unfair than settling this problem by another injustice, the victims of which would be the Arabs in Palestine, to whatever religious faith they belong'.

A special political committee was appointed to prepare the draft pact of the League, based on the Alexandria Protocol. The committee

¹ The delegates of Saudi Arabia and Yaman declared that they had to submit the Protocol to their Governments for approval before signature. Later on Saudi Arabia signed the Protocol on 7 January 1945, and Yaman on 4 February 1945.

held sixteen meetings (14 February—3 March 1945) and prepared a draft pact which was more elaborate but did not essentially differ in substance from the Alexandria Protocol. On 17 March 1945 the Preparatory Committee of the Arab League met at a general Arab Conference in Cairo and discussed the draft pact of the political committee. With minor alterations the pact was finally approved and signed on 22 March 1945.

Under Article 20 the pact was to come into force fifteen days after the Secretary-General had received the instruments of ratification. On 25 April 1945 Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, and Saudi Arabia deposited their ratifications, and the League legally came into existence on 10 May 1945.

The Arab Pact provides for the establishment of an Arab League whose members are those Arab States who have signed or will sign that pact. The League is made up of a Council, composed of the representatives of its members, with one vote for every member-State regardless of the number of representatives; a General Secretariat for organizing the work of the League; and a number of committees dealing with various matters connected with the Arab League.

Membership in the League is open only to independent Arab States. The original members who signed the pact were Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yaman.

The purpose of the Arab League, as stated in its pact, is to promote the common interests of the member-States, to realize closer collaboration among them, and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty. Since the Arab countries which have not yet won their independence were not eligible for membership, the Arab League extended its scope 'to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries'. As stated in the pact, co-operation among member-States will be specifically promoted in the following matters: (1) economic and financial matters, including trade, customs, currency, and industry; (2) communications, including railways, roads, aviation, navigation, and posts and telegraphs; (3) cultural matters; (4) matters connected with nationality, passports, visas, execution of judgement, and extradition; (5) matters of social welfare; and (6) matters of health.

The use of force for the settlement of disputes between members is prohibited. 'Should there arise among them a dispute that does not involve the independence of a State, its sovereignty or its territorial

integrity, and should the two contending parties apply to the Council for the settlement of this dispute, the decision of the Council shall then be effective and obligatory.¹ The Council of the League will mediate in a dispute which may lead to war between two member-States or between a member-State and another in order to conciliate them. Decisions relating to arbitrations and mediation are to be taken by majority vote only.

In the case of aggression or the threat of aggression, the member-State may request an immediate meeting of the League Council. The Council will decide, by a unanimous vote, upon the measures to be taken against the aggressor. If the aggressor were a State Member of the Arab League, 'the vote of that State will not be counted in determining unanimity'.² The nature of sanctions, whether military or economic, to be applied against the aggressor, is not defined. As in the League of Nations, the Council is to consider what measures would be most effective in the circumstances. The only specific sanction mentioned in the Arab Pact to be applied automatically is dismissal. Article 18 states: 'The Council of the League may consider any State that is not fulfilling the obligations resulting from this Pact as excluded from the League, by a decision taken by unanimous vote of all the States except the State referred to.'

Withdrawal from the League is voluntary—it takes effect after a year from notification sent to the League Council. But if a member-State does not approve an amendment to the pact carried by two-thirds of the members, that State may withdraw when the amendment becomes effective.

From the time when the Arab League was established, it was confronted with serious political problems before it had time to grow and gain strength. The Franco-Syrian dispute, which had arisen only one month after the League was legally established (10 May 1945), required calling an extraordinary session in June and the Council of the League passed a resolution to the effect that the League decided to take necessary measures in order to resist French 'aggression'. Fortunately, the Syrian crisis passed owing to the support given to Syria by the Great Powers when the case was taken up by the Security Council of the United Nations, and thus the Arab League was spared the effort to face the crisis alone against France.

Hardly had the Syrian crisis passed when the League was faced almost at the same time by two more serious problems which greatly

¹ Article 5.

² Article 6.

affected its prestige among the Arab States and in the world community. The two issues were the Palestine problem and the dynastic rivalry whose first feature was reflected in the so-called Greater Syria scheme. The Palestine problem, which required the solidarity and the full strength of the Arabs to forestall the establishment of Israel, confronted the Arabs before they had time to settle their dynastic differences and this had greatly weakened the Arab League when it decided to go to war with Israel. There was, it is true, a great deal of solidarity, or show of solidarity, in the initial stages of the Palestine conflict; but soon the dynastic motives conspired to prevent the League from taking any concerted action in the struggle with Israel. Iraq, which had no immediate interest in Palestine save the larger interest of resisting Zionist claims, had its share in the dynastic rivalry both because the two rulers of Iraq and Transjordan belong to the Hashimi family, and because of its recent quarrel with Egypt on the Syrian-Iraqi unity.

On the social, economic, and cultural plane, the Arab League laid down more ambitious programmes which, if they could be carried out, would have more far-reaching significance in achieving Arab solidarity than its political activities. Special committees were organized to study plans of postal and customs union, unification of communications, expansion of commercial relations, adoption of single passport system, and co-operation in legal, educational, and health matters. Some of these plans have reached the stage of being made into legal agreements, but mainly owing to political complications within the League it has been difficult to put them into effect.

Its critics have condemned the Arab League as a failure merely because it could not solve pending Arab issues. That the League has some defects in its structure and in its procedure must be admitted; but in its present form the League represents a stage of development in Arab regional organization which is capable of further improvement. The Arab League may be dissolved; but its dissolution will most likely be in favour of another more perfect 'league' or 'union' which gives expression to the desire for co-operation in Arab public affairs and the will to unity which is becoming increasingly strong among the various sections of the people.

RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND TRANSJORDAN

Since 1941 the two Hashimi kingdoms of Iraq and Transjordan have developed the habit of mutual consultation on foreign affairs.

Their representatives at the Alexandria and Cairo conferences in 1944 and 1945 expressed almost identical viewpoints, and later on, after the establishment of the Arab League, both countries entered into treaty relationship with Turkey in defiance of the protests of the other members of the Arab League.

Early in 1945 the rapprochement between Iraq and Transjordan inspired their two rulers to discuss the possibility of uniting the two countries. Conversations between the two Hashimi capitals continued for over a year about what sort of a union should be created. During King Abd-Allah's visit to Iraq in September 1946, a project of unity was drawn up in which the two countries would retain separate identity, but would unify their military, cultural, and diplomatic affairs. There would be standardized military equipment and training, and in foreign countries where only one of the two countries was represented, the representative would act for both Iraq and Transjordan. In such cases the representative would fly the common flag, which would be the original Hashimi flag flown during the Arab Revolt in the First World War. Politically the two countries would establish a Council composed of members appointed by each country. The Council would meet alternatively in Baghdad and 'Amman to consider general matters affecting both countries. There would also be a customs union and co-operation in all matters of common interest.¹

This scheme aroused criticism both abroad and within the two countries. The neighbouring Arab countries, especially Syria and Lebanon, showed grave concern lest the scheme might be a step to achieving King Abd-Allah's 'Greater Syria' project. The Arab League, it seems, was also not favourably disposed, though such a scheme of unity would be legally feasible within the framework of the Arab Pact. There was also opposition from the ranks of the Arab nationalists, mainly in Iraq, who criticized the scheme on the grounds that the union would cause dissension among the members of the Arab League. Moreover, some Iraqi critics thought that the union would permit Transjordan to interfere in the domestic affairs of Iraq and to secure Iraq's support in her expansionist policy. Finally, opposition came from certain critics who argued that Transjordan's treaty with Great Britain might lead to indirect British interference in Iraqi affairs.

¹ For a summary of the scheme, see *al-Ahram*, 11 February 1946, and *The Times*, 20 September 1946.

Owing to so much opposition the scheme of union was finally reduced to a Treaty of Alliance and Brotherhood between the two Hashimi kingdoms. The treaty was signed on 15 April 1947, and became effective when ratifications were exchanged on 10 June. The treaty provided for a closer alliance and 'eternal' brotherhood between Iraq and Transjordan, and that both parties would 'consult with each other whenever circumstances demand fulfilment of the purposes intended by the preamble to this Treaty'. The preamble to the treaty stated that security, co-operation, and complete mutual understanding on matters affecting the interests of the two countries were the purposes of the treaty. It made provision for co-operation in unifying military technique and training, in diplomatic representation abroad, and in settling disputes with a third State by peaceful means. In case of aggression by a third State, the two parties 'must consult on the nature of the measures that must be used to unite their efforts to repel and ward off that aggression' (Art. 5). Article 6 permitted military intervention by one party to suppress disorders or a rebellion in the other.

The treaty was criticized in Parliament and the press for permitting the military intervention of one party in the internal affairs of the other. The reason for inserting such a clause is to be explained only by the coup d'état of 1941 when help was badly needed by the Regent against Rashid Ali. The Arab Legion, it will be recalled, collaborated with the British forces in overthrowing Rashid Ali.¹

The treaty was approved by Parliament by a majority of 83 out of 132, but most of those who opposed it absented themselves and only two voted against it. The treaty came into force on 10 June 1947.

THE MIDDLE EAST PACT

In a previous section of this book, the pre-war Sa'dabad or Four-Power Middle East regional security pact of 8 July 1937 was discussed.² This pact, it will be recalled, had virtually become a dead letter when the Second World War broke out. When the war was over it was realized, especially by Turkey, that a closer union was needed to meet the new balance of power in the Middle East.

The initiative for a new alliance came from Turkey. When the Regent of Iraq, accompanied by General Nuri, was on a visit to England in July 1945, he received an invitation to visit Turkey on

¹ See Kamil al-Chadirchi, 'What is behind the Treaty between Iraq and Transjordan?', *Sawt al-Ahali*, 23 April 1947.

² pp. 247-8, above.

his way back to Iraq. In September the Regent and General Nuri were the guests of President Inönü where an informal proposal of forming a Middle Eastern bloc was discussed. The Turks, who could no longer depend on the Balkan States for support against the Soviet Union (since the Balkans, with the exception of Greece, had fallen under Soviet influence), turned to the Arab East instead. In so doing they were acting in conformity with British foreign policy, for Great Britain was also threatened by Russian ambition in the Middle East. The rapprochement of the Arab world with Turkey would complete the Middle Eastern chain begun in Greece for the 'containment' of the Soviet Union.

The initial reaction to Turkey's scheme was quite favourable, for General Nuri had already declared in favour of a stand with Great Britain against Russia.¹ But when General Nuri began his negotiations with Turkey in March 1946, he was no longer in office and was not empowered to negotiate a political treaty. He asked the Suwaydi Government for permission to negotiate such a treaty, but Suwaydi permitted him to sign technical but not political agreements.

Nevertheless, General Nuri initiated a treaty of friendship and *bon voisinage*, and then asked the Government to approve it.² It was an embarrassing situation and the Suwaydi Government did not want to take a hostile attitude towards Turkey by denouncing the treaty. Apart from the technical protocols, the treaty was in the nature of a regional security pact which provided for mutual consultation in foreign affairs, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, and co-operation in regional matters within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

To solve the problem, the Suwaydi Government proposed to accept the treaty with one reservation, namely, that its provisions should not contravene Iraq's obligations under the Arab League Pact. Turkey did not approve the Suwaydi reservation, but the new Government formed by Salih Jabr in March 1947 accepted the treaty without reservation.

When the treaty was submitted to Parliament for approval, it was attacked both in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The main points of criticism may be summarized as follows: first, the treaty was

¹ Nuri as-Sa'id, 'Our position between the Russians and the Anglo-Americans', *al-Hilal*, vol. 55 (January 1947) pp. 72-3.

² For the inside story of the treaty, see the account of Sa'd Salih (Minister of the Interior under Suwaydi) in *al-Ahrar*, 3 June 1947.

not negotiated with the free will of Iraq, but it was 'imposed'. Secondly, the treaty might involve Iraq in a conflict with the Soviet Union, which Iraq wished to avoid. Thirdly, the treaty was regarded as inconsistent with the Arab Pact. Fourthly, the treaty provided that Iraq would recognize the present frontiers of Turkey, which implied recognition of the annexation of Alexandretta by Turkey without Syria's approval. General Nuri, who very ably defended the treaty, declared that its provisions would not contravene Iraq's obligations under the Pact; that Iraq's obligations in this treaty were the same as those which she had accepted in the Sa'dabad Pact, and that Turkey pledged herself to support the Arabs on the Palestine question. Though the official text of the treaty was in French, only the Arabic translation was submitted to Parliament. The treaty, in spite of all opposition, was approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 7 June 1947, having been opposed by only 13 deputies of 101 present; and by the Senate on 12 June, opposed by only 2 of 13 senators present.

Turkey's approach to the Arab world through Iraq was probably sound, for Iraq may be regarded as a link between the Sa'dabad and the Arab League regional systems. But since the Arab countries were divided within the Arab League into two camps (Iraq and Transjordan, the two Hashimi kingdoms, forming one bloc, opposed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria), the initiative taken by Turkey to enlist Iraq in a Middle Eastern bloc was construed by the other Arab countries as an attempt to weaken the Arab League by strengthening the Hashimi camp. General Nuri had tried to persuade Syria to join the Middle Eastern bloc but failed;¹ only Transjordan responded by signing a treaty with Turkey. The formation of a Middle Eastern bloc, would perhaps have been more attainable if its architect had first approached Egypt, as the leading Arab League country, rather than Iraq. But since Turkey approached the two Hashimi kingdoms first, the other Arab League countries tended to respond negatively to her call to achieve the proposed regional security system.

¹ See *Procès Verbal* of a meeting between General Nuri and Sa'd-Allah al-Jabiri, Prime Minister of Syria, in *Liwa' al-Istiqlal*, Baghdad, 5 October 1946, p. 3.

XII

EPILOGUE

THE collapse of the Rashid Ali regime resulted in putting the ultra-nationalists into the background and their leaders, it will be recalled, were either hanged or sent for the duration of the war into internment camps. The entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war on the side of Great Britain and the signing of the Declaration of the United Nations on 1 January 1942, embodying the principles of the Atlantic Charter, had immensely enhanced the position of the liberal and moderate nationalists who had again come to the fore in Iraqi politics and who began actively to co-operate with democracy against dictatorship.¹ Further, political consciousness was aroused throughout Iraq as a result of the avalanche of declarations, broadcasts, and propaganda literature extolling merits of the democratic way of life and promising improvement in the internal conditions of the country if the democratic countries won the war.² The Iraqis endured a serious increase in prices (owing to the shortage of foreign commodities, and to speculation and inflation), as well as martial law, security laws, and regulations which restricted personal liberty and the freedom of the press, trusting that the end of the war would bring the promised better life.

When hostilities came to an end, the Iraqi Government, then headed by Hamdi al-Pachachi, made no move which showed any inclination towards progress or granting the democratic freedoms. Pachachi, though he was one of the most generally respected elder politicians, was in fact too weak to inaugurate any reforms. The victory of the British Labour Party in the general elections of 1945 was particularly discussed in Baghdad political circles and the press as favouring the liberal and democratic forces in Iraq. But the Pachachi Government

¹ See *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 9th Session, 1942, pp. 10–11, 15–22.

² The Baghdad branch of the Brothers of Freedom aroused great interest in the democratic way of life. The British Council and the Public Relations Office of the British Embassy in Baghdad did the same thing among educated Iraqis. See Freya Stark, *East Is West* (London, Murray, 1945) pp. 164–9.

paid no attention to the new spirit, and the security regulations, censorship, and martial law continued. The press began to agitate for a Cabinet change, but Pachachi would not resign.

Owing to continued protests made by representatives of various shades of opinion to the Regent, the latter took the unprecedented step of calling a meeting of deputies and senators on 27 December 1945, without consulting the Prime Minister, and made a speech in which he attributed the recurrence of coups d'état in the past to the absence of parliamentary government. He called for the formation of political parties, and promised full freedom for their activities and the inauguration of economic and social reform.¹

The immediate reactions to the Regent's speech were prompt and favourable, but the elder politicians and the reactionaries viewed it with grave suspicion. The Pachachi Government, which represented the vested interests of the elder politicians failed to honour the Regent's promises in spite of criticism in Parliament.² Pachachi tendered his resignation on 30 January 1946.

LIBERALISM VERSUS REACTION

The Regent called a meeting of the leading politicians at his palace and there was a difference of opinion on the new government to be formed. There were rumours that the elder politicians wanted a strong government that could check the development of liberal and progressive forces and did not want to try out a liberal government. A Cabinet crisis developed which lasted twenty-five days owing to the inability of certain elder politicians, including General Nuri as-Sa'id, to form a Cabinet.³ The international situation in the Middle East, however, was such that a liberal Government was deemed necessary to satisfy the clamour of liberalism. The Azerbaijan movement, inspired by the Soviet Union, had disturbed Persia and other neighbouring countries and it was feared that a reactionary government might force the liberals into open revolt. The crisis was

¹ For the text of the speech, see *al-Bilad*, 28 December 1945.

² For a devastating criticism of the Government, see a speech made by Majid Mustafa in Parliament on 10 January 1946 (*Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 10th Session, 1945–6, pp. 141–4). Unfortunately, when Majid Mustafa was attacked by Mustafa al-Umari, an elder politician of the reactionary school, he lost courage and withdrew his statement (*ibid.* pp. 145–6, 173–4).

³ Information supplied to the writer by Tawfiq as-Suwaydi, who attended the palace meeting. See also *Proceedings of the Senate*, 20th Session, 1945–6, pp. 44–9.

accordingly resolved by inviting Tawfiq as-Suwaydi to form the new Government on 23 February 1946.

The Suwaydi Government was composed of a number of young men sympathetic to liberalism who were determined to carry out the policy of reforms promised in the Regent's speech of 27 December. Suwaydi's Minister of the Interior, Sa'd Salih, a man of great moral integrity, proved to be instrumental not only in abolishing the war regulations and restrictions but also, in spite of criticism of certain elder politicians,¹ in granting permission for the formation of five new political parties.² Further, the Suwaydi Government announced a programme of reform based on the principles proclaimed by the Regent in his speech of 27 December, including the enactment of a new electoral law and the strengthening of parliamentary government. With regard to foreign policy, Suwaydi proposed to revise the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, and to follow a strong Arab policy with a view to strengthening the Arab League rather than favouring an alliance with Turkey at the expense of Arab solidarity.³ Neither the Regent nor General Nuri, who advocated a pro-Turkish alliance, could agree to this, and it seems they encouraged the elder politicians to force Suwaydi to resign.

The conspiracy against Suwaydi, who enjoyed the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies, was planned in the Senate. On 23 March 1946 the Suwaydi Government submitted to the Senate a temporary budget for two months, as the general budgetary law had not yet been submitted to Parliament, but it was noticed that nine senators were absent. The remaining sixteen senators, having approved the new Electoral Law which was first on the agenda, asked for a recess of five minutes. When the meeting was resumed, it was found impossible to consider the temporary budgetary law since nine other senators had absented themselves from the meeting and there was no quorum. This action was a deliberate move to force Suwaydi to resign because the parliamentary extraordinary session was coming to an end and the Government could not continue in office without a

¹ See a statement made by Arshad al-Umari in Parliament on 3 March 1946, criticizing Sa'd Salih for permitting the formation of a number of political parties (*Proceedings of the Senate*, 20th Session, 1945-6, pp. 68-70).

² See pp. 217-19.

³ The writer's interview with Prime Minister Suwaydi. See also statement by Suwaydi in Parliament on 11 March 1946 (*Proceedings of the Senate*, 20th Session, 1945-6, p. 46). For the text of Suwaydi's Government programme, see *Proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies*, 10th Session, 1945-6, pp. 205-6.

temporary budgetary law to finance the administration. It was thus that the Suwaydi Government, though it was earnestly trying to carry out its reform programme, was forced to resign on 30 May 1946.

On 1 June 1946 the Regent called upon Arshad al-Umari, one of the senators who planned the plot against Suwaydi, to form the new Government. Al-Umari quickly formed his Cabinet, recruited mainly from senior Government officials, and declared that his Government was 'neutral and transitional', for the purpose of applying the new Electoral Law passed by the Suwaydi Government and carrying out new and free elections. But it was soon realized that since Arshad al-Umari represented the elder politicians and his attitude was hostile to the new parties, his Government could hardly be called neutral and transitional. His hostility was clearly shown when in his first month of office six warnings were issued to the press, and six papers including party organs were suspended. Demonstrations against the Government's action followed, but al-Umari responded merely by tightening his regime of censorship and arresting party leaders and suspected instigators.¹ In July, when the Iraqi workers went on strike in Kirkuk demanding that the Iraq Petroleum Company increase their wages, the Iraqi police fired into a labour demonstration, killing eight men and wounding a number of them.² Prime Minister Umari was bitterly attacked for this 'massacre'; but anger against his Government rose still higher in August when Great Britain, threatened by another strike in the Abadan oil-fields, moved forces from India, to reinforce those in Basrah, just across the border in Iraq. The opposition papers promptly attacked the Umari Government and asserted that this was a violation of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, which permitted Britain to send reinforcements only in time of war or threat of war. The papers were suppressed and their 'editors brought to trial. This provoked a printers' and railway workers' strike, but the Government knew no other punishment but arrest.

It was soon realized that al-Umari could neither break up the parties nor carry out the elections without disturbances. When the Regent returned to Baghdad from a visit to England, he showed

¹ The opposition papers often attacked Arshad al-Umari on personal grounds and referred to him as the 'erratic and unbalanced Prime Minister' (M. H. Hadid, 'Conditions in Iraq', *New Statesman and Nation*, vol. 32 (4 September 1946) p. 186).

² For a detailed account of this incident and its relation with Communist activities, see p. 274, below.

dissatisfaction with Umari's handling of the situation and expressed his desire for a Cabinet change. Umari accordingly tendered his resignation on 14 November 1946, having stayed in office barely six months.

The Regent called upon General Nuri as-Sa'id to form the new Government on 21 November with instructions to hold new elections. During the four months while he remained in power General Nuri achieved two important results. First, he created dissension among the parties by inviting two of them, the Ahrar (Liberal) and the National Democratic Party, to take part in the formation of his Government but ignoring the other three, namely, the Istiqlal, Ittihad, and Sha'b. The agreement of the two parties to co-operate with General Nuri without prior consultation with the other three completely broke the solidarity which Arshad al-Umari had so unwittingly created by inaugurating his regime of repression. Secondly, General Nuri proceeded to carry out the new elections with great care to ensure the success of his own supporters. His manipulation of the elections, however, so flagrantly contradicted his promises of free elections that two of his Cabinet members, representing the Liberal and National Democratic parties, resigned in protest.¹ But General Nuri had achieved his two objectives and resigned on 11 March 1947, in favour of a successor who was to carry out a policy outlined to him by the Regent and General Nuri. The Regent invited senator Salih Jabr to form the new Government on 29 March, while General Nuri retired to the Senate to guide his protégé from behind the scene.

THE TREATY OF PORTSMOUTH

The Jabr Government announced an ambitious programme of reforms, including the revision of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, the signing of an Iraqi-Transjordan treaty, and the ratification of a Turco-Iraqi agreement.² The Turkish and Transjordan treaties, though approved by Parliament, were opposed by all the political parties and certain sections of the people. The parties, by taking a firm stand against these, recovered some of the solidarity they lost

¹ At least the representative of the National Democratic Party resigned on the question of free elections. See an exchange of letters between Chadirchi, leader of the National Democratic Party, and Prime Minister Nuri as-Sa'id, on 21 January 1946 (Baghdad, Government Press, 1946).

² *The Times*, 25 June 1947, p. 5. For the Turkish and Transjordan treaties, see pp. 259–63 above.

under General Nuri. Further, the economic and food situation had deteriorated to such an extent that the opposition were able to take full advantage of this to agitate and call for the resignation of Salih Jabr.

In spite of that the Jabr Government opened official negotiations with Great Britain in December 1947. The initial mistake they made was in not first consulting the leaders of political parties. They only consulted a number of elder politicians who were summoned by the Regent to a meeting at the Rihab Palace on 28 December 1947, where a general discussion was held on the terms of the new treaty. The political parties were not invited or represented at this meeting. There was no agreement, it seems, on the fundamental provisions of the treaty.

The next step was that a delegation led by Prime Minister Salih Jabr left Baghdad on 5 January 1948 and arrived in London the next day. The terms of treaty had already been agreed upon between the British and the Iraqi Foreign Offices.

On 15 January the treaty was signed at Portsmouth by the British and the Iraqi delegations.¹ Mr Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, made a statement in which he said:²

The negotiations for the treaty had not been negotiations of two people seeking to take advantage of one another, or to reconcile greater differences, but to put their friendship into words. Everything which was objectionable in the old treaty had been removed and they had established in this one what had been the practice for some time, that of meeting each other on terms of absolute equality, and with the determination to make their mutual contribution according to their capacity, strength, man-power, and will to the peace of the world. This treaty is the beginning of a new series of treaties, regularizing and expressing the friendship between this country and the Arabic world. Great Britain prized that friendship, and I am sure the Arabic world equally values it.

In reply Salih Jabr, Prime Minister of Iraq, said on behalf of his Government that ' . . . they were signing a treaty which was an expression to live as free and equal allies and friends. It put the traditional friendship of their two peoples on a new, firm, and solid basis. This treaty would help them to work together for international peace and prosperity.'

¹ Portsmouth happened to be more convenient than London, because the Iraqi delegation were visiting British defence organizations, and Mr Bevin was on holiday in the neighbourhood.

² *The Times*, 16 January 1948.

On the occasion of signing the Treaty of Portsmouth King George VI sent to Amir Abd al-Ilah, Regent of Iraq, the following message:¹

The signature to-day of a new Treaty of Alliance between our two countries has given me great pleasure, and I wish to take this opportunity of assuring Your Royal Highness of my deep and sincere friendship for the Royal House and people of Iraq. I trust that the signature of this treaty will open a further period of close and friendly co-operation between Great Britain and Iraq. I am sure that this will be in the common interest of both our countries and you may rely upon my Government in the United Kingdom to do all in their power to give practical expression to the principles embodied in this treaty.

Amir Abd al-Ilah replied:²

I was deeply touched by Your Majesty's message on the occasion of the signing of the new treaty of alliance between our two countries concluded on 15 January. It gives me great pleasure to take this happy opportunity to emphasize the strong ties of friendship existing between our two royal houses and our peoples. I am sure that this treaty will be in the interest of our two countries and their common benefits, and will consolidate the sincere friendship between us.

The Portsmouth Treaty was certainly an improvement on the Treaty of 1930. It emphasized, in its preamble, the 'complete freedom, equality, and independence' of Iraq. The two air bases at Habbaniyah and Shu'aybah were handed over to the Iraqi Government, but not before the coming into force of the new peace treaties. One important innovation which was resented and criticized by the Iraqi press was the establishment of the Joint Defence Board which, though representation on it was equal, was believed to be in the interests of Britain only. In regard to the employment of British technicians and advisers, the treaty made little change. The provisions of the new treaty brought those of the older into line with the United Nations Charter, and from the Iraqi viewpoint, with the Sa'dabad and Arab League Pacts.

Before the text of the treaty was made public in Baghdad, demonstrations took place almost daily since the Iraqi Foreign Minister stated on 3 January that negotiations were in progress for signing a new Treaty of Alliance between Britain and Iraq. When the text of the treaty was released to the Iraqi daily papers on 16 January, agitation against it began by demonstrations organized by students of the various colleges. These were followed by popular demonstra-

¹ *The Times*, 16 January 1948.

² *ibid.* 22 January 1948, p. 4.

tions, and the excitement of the people reached a high pitch. The political parties, excluded as they were from all formal consultation and with their activities subjected to rigid control and censorship, saw their opportunity in this popular excitement, and joined hands with the students and public, demanding the dismissal of the Jabr Government and the repudiation of the treaty. From 17 to 21 January the agitation and demonstrations continued in spite of all efforts made by the city police to stop disorder. In the evening (21 January), the Regent called a meeting of the leading ministers, politicians, and representatives of the parties at the Royal *Diwan* to discuss the situation. The representatives of the parties attacked the Jabr Government and demanded the immediate repudiation of the treaty. The meeting lasted five hours and the Regent, in order to put an end to disorder and placate the people, issued the following proclamation:¹

In view of the importance attached by the Regent to the country's public affairs, and of present circumstances, the Regent summoned the leaders of public opinion, comprising former Premiers, the Vice-President of the Senate, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, and representatives of political parties, to a meeting at the Royal Palace (*Diwan*) at which the entire Cabinet was present. They unanimously decided that the Anglo-Iraqi treaty signed at Portsmouth does not realize the country's aspirations, and is not a beneficial instrument to consolidate the bonds of friendship between the two countries. As the Council of Ministers has not approved ratification of the treaty, the Regent promises the Iraqi people that no treaty will be ratified that does not assure the rights of the country and the national aspirations.

While the situation had become critical in Baghdad, Prime Minister Salih Jabr was still in London and made a statement on 22 January in which he denounced his political opponents as 'destructive elements' who had 'exploited some innocent students and succeeded in creating disorders'.

On our return to Iraq [continued Salih Jabr] we shall explain the intentions of the new treaty to the Parliament and people. We are confident that it will be found that the national aspirations of the country are fully realized in this treaty and that the overwhelming majority of the country will support it. It is with this belief that my colleagues and myself signed this treaty.²

On 25 January Prime Minister Jabr left England for Iraq and arrived in Baghdad the following day. He had an audience with the Regent

¹ Arabic text in *Sawt al-Ahali*, 11 February 1948; English translation in *The Times*, 22 January 1948.

² *ibid.* 23 January 1948.

and requested an opportunity to defend his position before the Iraq public. He broadcast a statement to the nation in which he stated that a full explanation of the provisions of the treaty would be shortly announced before a final decision on its merits should be taken. In the meantime, orders were issued to the police to stop by force any demonstrations that might take place. The immediate reactions to Jabr's failure to resign and his insistence on defending the treaty incited an already excited public to clash with the police and there were several casualties. Cries of 'down with Salih Jabr' and 'down with the treaty' were reiterated, but Jabr would not resign. In protest against the severe action taken by the police, Jamal Baban, Minister of Justice, Abd al-Aziz Qassab, President of the Chamber of Deputies, and about thirty deputies presented their resignations. Faced with such overwhelming opposition from the people and from a number of his colleagues, Jabr presented his resignation in the evening (27 January). His resignation was immediately accepted, and the Regent invited Muhammad as-Sadr, a former President of the Senate, who was in constant touch with the leaders of the political parties and the Regent, to form a new Government.¹

The Sadr Government, which comprised a number of opponents of the Jabr Government, including both some elder politicians and members of the younger generation, assumed office on 29 January and announced its intention of repudiating the treaty, dissolving Parliament, holding new elections, and improving the economic condition of the country. This Government, which remained in office only six months, helped to restore order but could do nothing positive to inspire stability or improve the administrative machine which had deteriorated greatly during the war. Instead of rallying constructive forces, Sadr sought the co-operation only of the Istiqlal Party, and the majority of his Cabinet ministers were indifferent. Moreover, the Palestine question continued to contribute to internal unrest and popular frustration.² Sadr resigned on 20 June in favour of Muzahim al-Pachachi, formerly known as a forceful figure in Iraqi politics, but long kept from power, who undertook to govern the country with a strong hand. Here again frustration in Palestine caused the fall of

¹ For a critical account of Iraq's repudiation of the treaty, see 'What Does Iraq Want?', *The Economist*, 31 January 1948, pp. 172-3.

² For the profound national frustration caused by the Palestine War, see Costi Zurayk, *Meaning of the Tragedy* (Beirut, 1948), and Musa al-Alami, *The Lessons of Palestine* (Beirut, 1949; in Arabic). Alami's book has been summarized and translated in *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 3 (October 1949) pp. 373-405.

Pachachi, who was succeeded by General Nuri on 6 January 1949, with a view to taking a firm stand against Israel and to combat Communist activities in Iraq to which General Nuri ascribed the main cause of internal disturbances. While General Nuri could contribute little to the Palestine question, he was able to crush the secret Communist organizations with an iron hand.

SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES

The Communist movement in Iraq may be regarded as an offshoot of the Ahali movement; but it was only when the Ahali group failed to persuade Bakr Sidqi to accept a liberal programme that the extremists members of the group turned against Bakr and reorganized themselves as a bona fide Communist group. Hikmat Sulayman and Bakr Sidqi, it will be recalled, retorted by suppressing their activities and banished from Iraq Abd al-Qadir Isma'il and his brother, their two outspoken members.¹ In order to put an end to any impending threat of Communism, to which the nationalists objected, Parliament had passed legislation in 1938 outlawing Communism in Iraq and punishing any person engaged in Communist activities with penal servitude or death.² In the circumstances the Communist movement suffered a setback, from which it was unable to recover until the coming of the war.

When, however, the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact on 26 August 1939, the Communists in Iraq were ready to co-operate with the pan-Arab group, and when Rashid Ali seized power in 1941, they actively supported his regime.

The sudden rupture of Nazi-Soviet relations was bound to have repercussions on the attitude of the Iraqi Communists towards their pro-Nazi compatriots. When Russia was formally declared an ally of Great Britain, the Iraqi liberal and Communist groups began to contemplate reconciliation with Britain. So far as the writer is aware, the first bold step was the approach to the British authorites made by George Mansur (a Palestinian Labour leader who escaped to Iraq in May 1941 to take active part in Rashid Ali's Department of Propaganda), when he offered the co-operation of the 'Arab sympathizers

¹ Abd al-Qadir Isma'il and his brother, Yusuf Isma'il, went to Paris in 1937. Yusuf is still in Paris, but Abd al-Qadir returned to Damascus and remained there. Both of these two Iraqi Communists continued to take active part in Communist activities.

² See Articles 89 and 89A of the Baghdad Penal Code.

with Democracy', in a letter addressed to Sir Kinahan Cornwallis, the British Ambassador to Iraq, on 9 July 1941. He said:¹

Hitler's recent attack on the U.S.S.R. has provided Great Britain with many advantages which will ultimately end in British victory. Arab sympathizers with democracy cannot any more remain inactive or allow their countries' grievances to prevent them from rendering every possible assistance to Great Britain since the issue has developed into a world conflict between dictatorship and democracy, and democracy, of course, must win. . . . This is one reason why I believe Great Britain must take advantage of the present situation and approach the Arab problem from the right direction. . . .

By the end of 1941 various Communist groupings were organized, but failed to create a unified front owing to their disagreement both on personal and procedural grounds. The most important group, led by Yusuf Salman Yusuf (called Comrade Fahd), organized the secret Iraqi Communist Party and issued a secret paper called the *Qa'ida* (foundation).

When the Suwaydi Government licensed five parties to be officially recognized in 1945, it denied the Communists permission to organize the Taharrur al-Watani (National Liberation) Party. The Communists thus resorted to clandestine activities to circulate their unlicensed papers secretly. In particular they organized demonstrations inciting workers to strike and arousing students to agitate against the Government. The Kirkuk strike of July 1946 and the uprising of January 1948 were probably the most outstanding incidents which the Communists could boast of having taken active part in their initial stages.

The Kirkuk strike of 3 July 1946, although fully exploited by the Communists, was in the main the result of the bad post-war economic conditions. Wages of workers of the Iraq Petroleum Company, though considered fairly good, had not kept up with the rise in prices, and there was a critical housing shortage. When the workers' demands for an increase in wages and the formation of a trade union were not conceded, they struck and denounced their employers as 'imperialist exploiters'. On 14 July, when the 3,000 workers appear to have seen no tangible results of their strike and were about to return to work, the Iraqi police fired into a demonstration of about 400 workers, killing five to eight persons. This action, which many an Iraqi did not fail to represent as having been inspired by the I.P.C.,

¹ A copy of the letter was supplied to the writer by George Mansur.

undoubtedly embarrassed that company and aroused the bitter criticism of all Iraqi nationalists.¹ In the circumstances, in order to ease the situation, the company sent conciliators to the Iraqi Government who intervened on behalf of the workers to come to an agreement with the company. The workers were induced to go back to work by promising them to improve living conditions and to give adequate consideration to their demands. Wages were raised from 16 to 75 per cent, daily allowances for rent were added, medical facilities were extended, and housing plans were made. However, neither the company nor the local authorities, as an American correspondent who visited Kirkuk at that time commented, had the 'intention of allowing anything but a company union'.²

The Iraqi Government, faced with such increasing discontent and outbursts of popular demonstrations, was greatly alarmed and suspected the whole trouble was the result of secret Communist activities. Instructions were accordingly issued to the Police Department to investigate clandestine Communist activities, and the principal leaders were arrested at a surprise police raid in January 1947. Comrade Fahd, Secretary-General of the secret Iraq Communist Party, as well as other leaders were brought to trial and given severe sentences. Further investigations were made in 1948 and 1949 which resulted in the arrest of a few other leaders, who were also brought to trial. The four principal leaders, including Fahd, who was again brought to trial on the charge of secretly corresponding with the Communists from prison, were sentenced to death and hanged on 14 February 1949.³ This action undoubtedly rid the country of a handful of active Communist leaders, but it is doubtful if it by any means touched the basic cause of public discontent, which has offered in the past, and will probably continue to offer in the future, opportunities to adventurers to exploit the discontent of the masses by inciting them against authority. The ruling oligarchy appear to have been indifferent, and perhaps lacking in courage to approach the problem squarely by introducing such drastic social and economic reforms as

¹ *al-Bilad*, 17 July 1946; *Liwa' al-Istiqlal*, 4 Oct. 1946.

² Andrew Roth, 'Iraq: Black Gold, and Poverty', *The Nation*, vol. 164 (April 1947) pp. 444-6.

³ For text of the death sentence, see *Sawt al-Ahrar*, 15 February 1949. The Iraqi Government published six volumes comprising the evidence, documents, and other materials which the Police Department had gathered regarding Communist activities in Iraq. See *Secret Compilation Regarding the Secret Iraqi Communist Party* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1950).

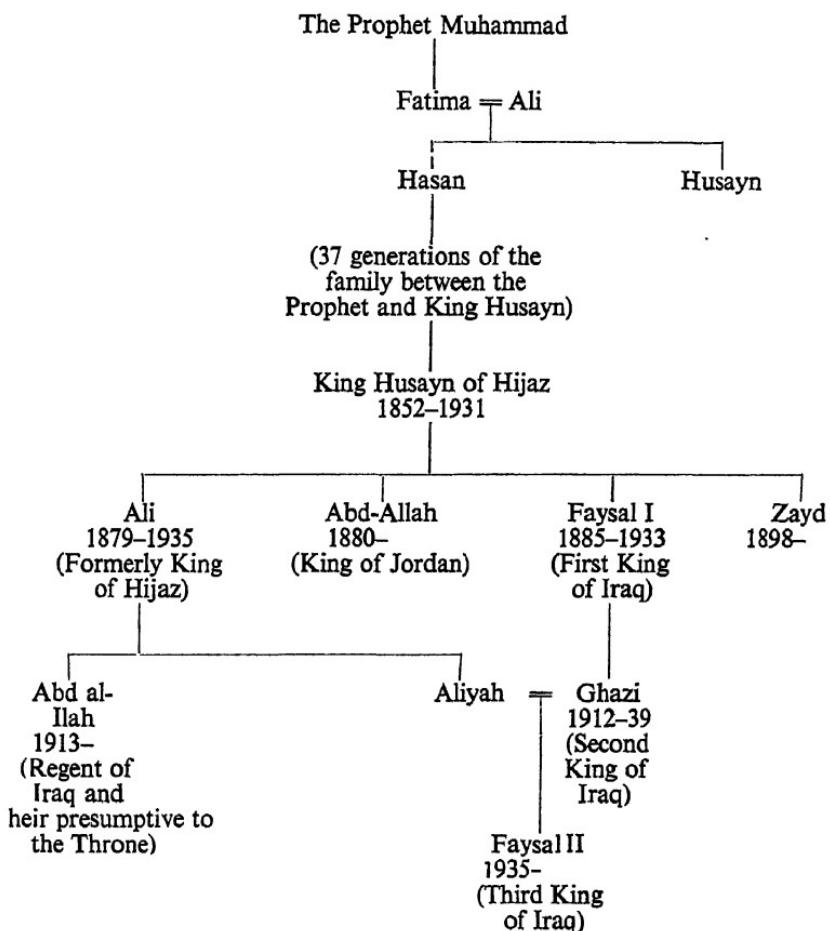
might mitigate the widespread discontent of the people and inspire confidence in the Government.

CONCLUSION

In the circumstances it is interesting to speculate on what the future has in store for Iraq. If unrest and coups d'état are not brought under control, foreign intervention is likely to be invited. With the partial or complete withdrawal of Great Britain, the maintenance of the integrity and political independence of Iraq has devolved upon the national Government. If the national Government cannot acquire enough strength through conceding certain of the popular demands and through seeking the co-operation of the liberal groups, its position will be greatly weakened by continual popular upheavals or by the intervention, or the threat of intervention, of another foreign Power. In fact it seems that the threat of possible foreign intervention may force the ruling class to concede certain popular demands. Russia's intervention in the Azerbaijan revolt is a case in point. In 1946 fear of similar popular unrest in Iraq inspired the Government to promise social reforms and gave a certain measure of freedom to liberal groups. When Russia was forced to withdraw from Persia, the relief from the threat of further Russian penetration was followed by a conservative reaction in Iraq, which prompted the Government to limit the activities of political parties and arrest left-wing leaders on the grounds of their alleged Communist activities. Another possible impetus to reform, which will probably be more keenly felt in the future, is the failure of Iraq (and the other Arab countries) in the Palestine war. The shock produced by Arab defeat has perhaps not yet been felt by the masses, but the Government is well aware of the increasing popular pressure resulting from its failure to prevent the Jews from establishing the State of Israel. If the Iraqi Government fails to introduce reforms or to achieve certain national objectives, popular discontent and unrest may be difficult to control.

APPENDIX I

THE HASHIMI FAMILY



APPENDIX II

THE IRAQI CABINETS

	<i>Prime Minister</i>	<i>Term of office</i>
The Provisional Government.	Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaylani.	23 October 1920– 23 August 1921.
The following Cabinets:		
1.	Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaylani.	10 September 1921– 14 August 1922.
2.	Abd ar-Rahman al-Gaylani.	30 August 1922– 16 November 1922.
3.	Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun.	20 November 1922– 16 November 1923.
4.	Ja'far al-Askari.	22 November 1923– 2 August 1924.
5.	Yasin al-Hashimi.	2 August 1924– 20 June 1925.
6.	Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun.	26 June 1925– 1 November 1926.
7.	Ja'far al-Askari.	21 November 1926– 8 January 1928.
8.	Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun.	14 January 1928– 20 January 1929.
9.	Tawfiq as-Suwaydi.	28 April 1929– 25 August 1929.
10.	Abd al-Muhsin as-Sa'dun.	19 September 1929– 13 November 1929.
11.	Naji as-Suwaydi.	18 November 1929– 19 March 1930.
12.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	23 March 1930– 19 October 1930.
13.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	19 October 1930– 27 October 1932.
14.	Naji Shawkat.	3 November 1932– 18 March 1933.
15.	Rashid Ali al-Gaylani.	20 March 1933– 9 September 1933.
16.	Rashid Ali al-Gaylani.	9 September 1933– 28 October 1933.
17.	Jamil al-Midfa'i.	9 November 1933– 10 February 1934.
18.	Jamil al-Midfa'i.	21 February 1934– 25 August 1934.

The following Cabinets:	<i>Prime Minister</i>	<i>Term of office</i>
19.	Ali Jawdat.	27 August 1934– 23 February 1935.
20.	Jamil al-Midfa'i.	4 March 1935– 16 March 1935.
21.	Yasin al-Hashimi.	17 March 1935– 29 October 1936.
22.	Hikmat Sulayman.	29 October 1936– 16 August 1937.
23.	Jamil al-Midfa'i.	17 August 1937– 25 December 1938.
24.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	25 December 1938– 6 April 1939.
25.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	6 April 1939– 21 February 1940.
26.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	22 February 1940– 31 March 1940.
27.	Rashid Ali al-Gaylani.	31 March 1940– 30 January 1941.
28.	Taha al-Hashimi.	1 February 1941– 1 April 1941.
29.	Rashid Ali al-Gaylani.	12 April 1941– 29 May 1941.
30.	Jamil al-Midfa'i.	2 June 1941– 7 October 1941.
31.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	9 October 1941– 8 October 1942.
32.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	8 October 1942– 25 December 1943.
33.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	25 December 1943– 3 June 1944.
34.	Hamdi al-Pachachi.	4 June 1944– 29 August 1944.
35.	Hamdi al-Pachachi.	29 August 1944– 31 January 1946.
36.	Tawfiq as-Suwaydi.	23 February 1946– 30 May 1946.
37.	Arshad al-Umari.	1 June 1946– 14 November 1946.
38.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	21 November 1946– 11 March 1947.
39.	Salih Jabr.	29 March 1947– 27 January 1948.
40.	Muhammad as-Sadr.	29 January 1948– 6 June 1948.

The following Cabinets:	<i>Prime Minister</i>	<i>Term of office</i>
41.	Muzahim al-Pachachi.	26 June 1948– 6 January 1949.
42.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	6 January 1949– 6 December 1949.
43.	Ali Jawdat.	10 December 1949– 1 February 1950.
44.	Tawfiq as-Suwaydi.	5 February 1950– 15 September 1950
45.	Nuri as-Sa'id.	16 September 1950–

APPENDIX III

GENERAL NURI'S MEMORANDUM OF 15 DECEMBER 1940, SUBMITTED TO PRIME MINISTER RASHID ALI AL-GAYLANI¹

To H.E. the Prime Minister,

It is essential for the success of any Cabinet in a constitutional government that Cabinet members should work together with perfect co-operation and frankness in all the matters they deal with in order to be able to study and discuss those matters in an atmosphere of full confidence and freedom, and to decide in perfect harmony what principles should be adopted in steering the ship of State for whose safe voyage they are responsible.

These two factors have an outstanding influence in the life of old established States even in ordinary circumstances. What, therefore, would be the effect of these factors in a State like the young State of Iraq, under present world conditions, the like of which in gravity and complication the world has never before experienced?

I have said this as a foreword to my outspoken statement of opinion to Your Excellency on the present situation and the difficulties which are being encountered by Iraq. Naturally, only when one is able to diagnose the disease properly can one prescribe the right remedy.

Iraq—being one of the revived Arab countries—was, and still is, interested in the Arab cause and sympathizes with it. She has lost no opportunity to show her interest and sympathy, both during her struggle to get rid of the mandatory regime, and afterwards when she began to enjoy the status of an independent State.

Your Excellency is certainly aware of the tremendous efforts made by Iraq in this respect both during and after the late King Faysal's reign.

Prior to the outbreak of the present war Iraq had spared no effort in trying to have the Palestinian question settled, according to the wishes of the people of that country. The last effort that was made in this connexion was the conference of the Arab Governments which was held first in Cairo and then in London, and whose findings were published by the British Government in a White Paper.

In that Paper they definitely outlined their policy in Palestine, to limit immigration of Jews and to lay the foundations of the formation of the desired National Government of Palestine. In our opinion the most important defect in this policy was that it did not mention a definite date for the formation of the National Government.

¹ *Iraq Times*, 21 November 1941.

Some time after the publication of the White Paper the present war broke out and the Axis Powers seized the opportunity of the absence of a National Government in Palestine to start a propaganda campaign to serve their own purpose, whereby they expressed sympathy with the Arab cause and tried to stir up feeling among the Arabs, in spite of the fact that the Axis Powers themselves had already trespassed on their neighbours, an act which was in no way compatible with their pretensions of sympathy with the Arabs, especially as the countries which were the victims of their aggression were older, stronger, and better prepared than Iraq, and also had stronger racial and religious ties binding them to the Axis peoples than had the Arabs.

During this period Iraq was looking for an opportunity to urge the British Government to form a National Government in Palestine, having at heart the interests both of the British and the Arab nations. Your Excellency is certainly aware that things had gone so far that a semi-official proposal was submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies through Colonel Newcombe, suggesting the entrance of Iraq into the war on the British side in the East in return for the settlement of the Palestinian question by Great Britain, so as to meet the wishes of the Palestinian Arabs in a manner not incompatible with British policy as outlined in the White Paper. Undoubtedly, that step by Iraq was all that any State could take in a question of such interest to her.

The difficulty encountered by Iraq was due to the existence of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and to the feeling among Iraqis that Great Britain should be just to the Arabs of Palestine. This difficulty became graver when the German army invaded the Low Countries and Belgium, and after the subsequent speedy collapse of France.

The people of Iraq, as was the case with all the other nations of the world, were so struck with amazement that they began to consider the question of the safety of their own country, resorting to various solutions and hypotheses. Some of the leaders of Iraq even went so far as to believe firmly in the speedy and inevitable collapse of the British Empire, after which Iraq would be left alone to her fate. Those leaders then considered it necessary to think out a plan for Iraq by which she should emerge safely from this world-wide struggle which no one had anticipated.

Now the situation has changed, and six months have already elapsed since the collapse of France. The sequence of events has shown that the fall of the British Empire is not easily accomplished. Britain has stood firm against the storm, as she was expected to do by a few of the world's leading men who had wide experience of the moral and material potentialities of this Empire.

Although the result of the war is still in the hands of fate, yet the course of events shows that, in spite of the collapse of France, the British Empire is able alone to stand against the Axis Powers, and that her fall is no longer inevitable, as some so firmly believed last summer.

I now turn to the main subject which prompted me to write this memorandum, namely, the question of the difficulty which has recently arisen between the British Government and ourselves, owing to a misunderstanding caused by what has been published in the newspapers and by certain rumours which established facts do not support.

The people, as well as the Government of Iraq, are unanimous in seeking the safety of their country before anything else and in following the road which leads to that safety. Should the safety of our country be threatened it would then be the imperative duty of every one of us to parry the danger at once, without stopping to think how to extricate ourselves from censure and responsibility, or how each one of us might try to shake such blame or responsibility from his shoulders and to shift them on to those of others.

I, therefore, request your Excellency to allow me to submit the following points:

(1) For the first time in the history of Iraq we have received an official Note from the Government of the United States, dated 5th instant, in which they express their keen interest in the welfare of Iraq and their anxiety that Iraq should retain her independence. They confirm in their Note their policy to assist Great Britain with all the means available to them, short of a declaration of war, and state that the said assistance will increase day by day.

They advise the Iraqi Government to co-operate with the British Government, for the Government of the United States are convinced, and sufficient evidence is available to them to show, that should Great Britain lose the war, Iraq would inevitably lose her independence, which would be a calamity for all the countries of the Middle East.

The Note adds that any refusal by Iraq to co-operate with Great Britain and any permission given by her to the continuance of the spread of a propaganda of hatred among Iraqis against the British would have an adverse effect on the American Government. When this is reflected in American newspapers, the American public will react adversely towards such a policy, which is against its own wishes. This would certainly have unfavourable consequences as far as the interests of Iraq are concerned.

The American Government have drawn the attention of the Government of Iraq to the wise policy which has been adopted by Turkey who is the neighbour of Iraq.

At the same time, we have received a Note dated 6 December from the Iraq Minister Plenipotentiary in Ankara, in which he states that the Turkish Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has informed him that the Turkish Ambassador in Washington has telegraphed to his Government, informing them that he has learned from official American sources that the Government of Iraq are inclined to reopen relations with Germany; that the present Iraqi Government will either have to resign or re-establish relations between Iraq and Germany; and that the Turkish Government desire to know the validity of such information.

When the Iraqi Minister mentioned to the Turkish Under-Secretary of State the contents of the Speech from the Throne on the subject, the latter said that he was inclined to believe that the policy of the Iraqi Government was to co-operate with Great Britain. Yet he would be very pleased if he could have an assurance contradicting the information he had received from their Ambassador at Washington.

Such interest on the part of America in Iraq gives us a further opportunity for serving the Arab cause in a new field. It seems to me that the suggestion of sending an Arab mission, consisting of Iraqis, Palestinians, and Syrians, to America to explain the problems relevant to the Palestinian and the Syrian questions would help much in our endeavour to solve these two questions.

Should such a mission have at its head a capable person who can exploit the situation for the benefit of the Arabs, attract the attention of the American public as well as that of the persons concerned in that country, and convince them that his appeal regarding these two questions is a just one, his efforts will greatly help to overcome outstanding difficulties and will assist the British Government in getting rid of the active influence of the Zionists especially that of the American Zionists.

The Palestinian question is the root of all the evils which disturb and weaken Anglo-Iraqi relations. Any improvement in this respect will tend to improve and strengthen these relations. The American Government have already begun to show their interest in this question. The Council of Ministers have recently decided to create an Iraqi Legation in Washington and to appoint a chargé d'affaires.

I am in favour of reconsidering the question with a view to appointing a Minister Plenipotentiary instead of a chargé d'affaires, provided that the post is filled by an efficient person who should be supported by the Mission in question and obtain all possible facilities in carrying out his task in the best way, by using his official, as well as his personal, influence in its service.

(2) Article 4 of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty reads: 'Should . . . either of the High Contracting Parties become engaged in war, the other High Contracting Party will . . . immediately come to his aid in the capacity of an ally. In the event of an imminent menace of war the High Contracting Parties will immediately concert together the necessary measures of defence. The aid of His Majesty the King of Iraq in the event of war or the imminent menace of war will consist in furnishing to His Britannic Majesty on Iraqi territory all facilities and assistance in his power, including the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes and means of communication.'

The present Cabinet have confirmed the policy of maintaining the treaty relations with Great Britain, and they are still determined, as before, to enforce the letter and spirit of the treaty. So long as this is the actual policy of the Government, I suggest that while the Cabinet is taking all necessary measures to establish a real understanding between the Allies on the one hand, and, on the other, is trying to solve the problems of Palestine and

Syria by co-operating with the said Mission, Iraqi public opinion should be directed towards this policy through the agency of the press and radio, and by avoiding any action that may cause suspicion about Iraq's willingness to keep her pledges and promises. Such suspicion will be harmful and its adverse consequences may not be fully realized at the outset.

(3) At the beginning of this memorandum, I pointed out the importance of co-operation and plain talk, and their effect on the success of the Cabinet in its action.

As I believe that it is impossible for us to overcome our difficulties and to continue to work successfully, except through real and full co-operation, I, therefore, consider it my imperative duty to draw Your Excellency's attention to the urgent necessity of taking all necessary steps for this co-operation.

I am forwarding a copy of this memorandum to the Chief of the Royal Palace to be submitted to H.R.H. the Regent.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

Nuri as-Sa' id.

INDEX

(NOTE: Arab notabilities are indexed under their family names, with the exception of the two 'household words', Nuri as-Sa'id and Rashid Ali.)

- Abd al-Hamid (Sultan), 2, 3, 75, 77.
Abd-Allah (King), 253, 255, 260.
Abd al-Ilah (Regent), 20, 29, 136, 139, 210, 250, 262; policy of, 142, 143, 217, 265–6; and 4th coup d'état, 148–9; and Rashid Ali, 153–5, 174–82; return to Iraq, 200–1, 203–4; and Amendment Law, 213; and Treaty of Portsmouth, 269–70.
Abd al-Karim, Hilmi, 136.
Abd al-Mahdi, Sayyid, 140.
Abd al-Qadir, Shaykh, 39.
Abd al-Wahhab, Jamil, 207, 212.
Abetz-Darlan agreement, *see* France.
Abu al-Fath, Mahmud, 101.
Abu-Sukhayr, 54.
Abu-Tabikh, Muhsin, 50, 52–3, 56, 116, 117.
Abu 't-Timman, Ja'far, 56, 64, 225, 229; and Watani Party, 31; and Ahali group, 65–6, 74, 75, 77, 84, 85; Minister of Finance, 96–7; and Popular Reform Society, 113 n., 118; resignation, 114, 119.
Administration, system, 25–6; *see also* Government.
Afghanistan, 98, 160, 247–8.
Ahali, *al-* (newspaper), 72, 96, 102.
Ahali (Reformist) group, 98; opposition to Yasin–Rashid administration, 65–6; formation and policy, 71–5; and Bakr Sidqi coup d'état, 76–7, 83–5, 93; dissatisfaction with Hikmat–Bakr administration, 99, 104–7, 118–20; and National Democratic Party, 217–18.
Ahd Party, 31.
Ahrar (Liberal) Party, 217–18, 268.
Alami, Musa, *al-*, 170, 254, 255, 256, 272.
Ali, Mustafa, 108, 109, 111.
Anglo-Iraqi Treaty (1922), 14, 225; (1930), 155, 163–7, 170–1, 189–90, 227–31, 235–6; *see also* Portsmouth, Treaty of.
Arabia, *see* Saudi Arabia.
Arab League, 225, 246, 251–9, 266, 270.
Arab nationalism, *see* Nationalism.
Aras, Rüştü, 2, 247.
Army, Iraqi, 69–70, 78–80; political activities, 107–11; *see also* Coup d'état.
- Asad-Allah, Ahmad, 58.
Asil, Naji, *al-*, 93, 113, 121, 246.
Askari, General Ja'far, *al-*, 56, 87, 89, 90–3, 128, 224.
Assyrian massacre, 41, 44–5, 80–1, 138 n.
Atiya, Shaykh Sha'lan, *al-*, 54, 64.
Atlantic Charter, 250, 264.
Attar Bashi, Ibrahim, 221.
Attlee, Clement, 187.
Axis Powers, relations with Iraq, 140–2, 161–8, 170–2, 249; support of Rashid Ali, 194–200, 201; and Turkey, 248; Iraqi declaration of war on, 250–1.
Baban, Jalal, 272.
Babil, Nasuh, 101.
Babra Agreement, 238.
Bahrani, Ra'uif, *al-*, 56, 61.
Bakr Sidqi, *see* Sidqi, General Bakr.
Baqir Khan, Mirza Sayyid, 243, 245.
Ba'qubah, 84, 86, 179 n.
Barzanis, *see* Kurds.
Basrah, British forces at, 188–9; British capture of, 200–2.
Bassam, Sadiq, *al-*, 68, 69, 219, 220.
Bevin, Ernest, 269.
Bilad, *al-* (newspaper), 77, 111.
Britain, *see* Great Britain.
Butti, Rafael, 77, 101 n., 111.
Cabinet, composition of, 21–2.
Caliphate, 37 n.
Casey, R. G., 252, 255.
Chadirchi, Kamil, 100, 217, 220; and Ahali group, 66, 74; and Bakr Sidqi coup d'état, 84; Minister of Economics, 93; and Reformists, 114, 115, 119, 120.
Chadirchi, Ra'uif, *al-*, 85, 86, 88.
Chamber of Deputies, *see* Parliament.
China, treaty with, 249.
Christian deputies, 23, 221.
Churchill, Winston, 4, 5, 169, 251.
Ciano, Count, 197, 201 n.
Clayton, Sir Gilbert, 227, 234 n.
Communism, 12–13, 66, 111–12, 273–6.
Conscription, 50, 62, 117, 118.
Constantinople Protocol (1913), 242, 243, 244.
Constituent Assembly, 15–16.

- Constitution, 13–19, 206–7; 2nd Amendment Law, 19, 207–17.
- Constitutional Union Party, 219.
- Cornwallis, Sir Kinahan, 187, 188, 189, 203, 274.
- Coup d'état, Bakr Sidqi (1936), 71–90; 2nd (1937), 123–6; 3rd (1938), 130–3; 'alleged' (1939), 135–7; 4th (1940), 147–9; 5th (1941, Jan.), 174–8; Rashid Ali (1941, April), 180–7.
- Daftari, Mahmud Subhi, ad-, 102, 128, 207, 214.
- Da'ud, Da'ud, ad-, 63–4.
- Da'ud, Salman ash-Shaykh, 106, 111, 221, 249.
- Dawish, Faysal, ad-, 238.
- Dhahir, Abd al-Hadi, adh-, 207.
- Diwaniyah, *liwa*, 50, 124, 125, 150; tribes, 52, 53, 64, 114, 115, 117–18; Regent at, 176, 177–8.
- Drower, Sir Edwin, 15, 208, 216, 220.
- Economic problems, 11–13.
- Eden, Anthony, 168–9, 193, 252.
- Edmonds, C. S., 137, 142 n., 208, 216, 220.
- Egypt, 2, 33, 259; relations with Iraq, 67, 160; and Second World War, 193, 197, 253; and Arab League, 254, 257, 263.
- Elections: (1933), 50–1; (1935), 60–1; (1936–7), 103–4; (1939), 140.
- Electoral Law, 219–22.
- England, *see* Great Britain.
- Erzurum, Treaty of, 240–6.
- Fahd, Comrade, 274–5.
- Fallujah, 192, 201–2, 203.
- Farisi, Nasrat, al-, 48, 49, 219.
- Fawzi, General Husayn, 130, 131, 132, 148, 149.
- Faysal I (King), 13; career, 3–5; policy and achievements, 5–9, 32–3, 36–9, 133, 150, 174, 213, 223–5; visit to Britain, 41–4; and Assyrian massacre, 44–5; death, 45–7, 206.
- Faysal II (King), 20, 29, 139, 211.
- Foreign policy, 223–63.
- Foreign relations, control of, 24–5.
- France, 156, 161; and Syria and Lebanon, 4, 7, 157–8; Blum Government, 158–9; Vichy Government (Abetz-Darlan agreement), 195–7, 198–200; and Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 230–1.
- Futuwwah organization, 159, 161, 185.
- Gaylani, Abd ar-Rahman (Naqib of Baghdad), 13.
- Gaylani, Rashid ali, al-, *see* Rashid Ali.
- George V (King), 41, 42, 46.
- George VI (King), 142, 270.
- Germany, and Second World War, 141, 142, 199; propaganda in Iraq, 157, 165; support of Rashid Ali, 163, 167, 195–7, 201; Abetz-Darlan agreement, 195–7, 198–200; Iraqi declaration of war on, 250–1; *see also* Axis Powers.
- Ghalib, Ali, 108, 136.
- Ghannam, Razzuq, 221.
- Gharraf, 64; irrigation project, 48–9.
- Ghazi (King), 20, 29, 32, 44, 45, 46, 68, 86; and Bakr Sidqi coup d'état, 87–91; death of, 137–40.
- Ghita', Shak Muhammed Kashif, al-, 52–3, 54, 57–8.
- Government, 10–35.
- Great Britain, 65, 79, 239, 264, 267; relations with Iraq, 3–6, 233–8, 273–4; and termination of mandate, 133–4; Iraqi policy to, 98, 141–2, 144, 155; anti-British feeling, 156–70; and Rashid Ali, 187, 190–200; *see also* Anglo-Iraqi Treaty; Faysal; League of Nations, mandate; Portsmouth, Treaty of; Second World War.
- Grobba, Dr Fritz, 142.
- Habbaniyah, 191–2, 201–2, 270.
- Hadid, Muhammad, 72, 74, 75, 84, 106, 218, 267.
- Halifax, Lord, 166, 167.
- Hamandi, Ja'far, 119, 121.
- Haqqi, Isma'il, 124.
- Hasani, Abd ar-Razzaq, al-, 55.
- Hashimi, General Taha, al-, 81, 82–3, 128, 129, 130, 132, 148; and tribal rebellion, 55; Minister of Defence, 155, 174, 175; Prime Minister (1941), 178–81, 184, 185, 186.
- Hashimi, Yasin, al-, 31, 39, 51, 52, 94, 127, 219, 224; Prime Minister (1935–6), 56–90; deported, 100; and 3rd coup d'état, 129–33; and Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 229.
- Hassun, Salim, 65.
- Haydar, Rustum, 15, 39, 48–9, 128; chief of Royal *Diwan*, 39, 86, 102; Minister of Finance, 133; murder of, 144–6, 150, 151, 154.
- Hikmat Sulayman, *see* Sulayman, Hikmat.
- Hindi, Mahmud, 122.
- Hiskayl, Sasun, 15.
- Hitler, and Rashid Ali, 195, 196.

- Hoare, Sir Samuel, 229, 236.
 Holt, Captain V., 234, 237–8.
 Humphrys, Sir Francis, 34, 163, 227, 232, 234 n.
 Husayn, Jawad, 136.
 Husayn, Sharif, 3, 158 n., 176, 210.
 Husayni, Haj Amin, al- (Mufti of Jerusalem), 170, 194, 197.
 Husayni, Jamal, 170.
- Ibn Sa'ud, *see* Saudi Arabia.
 Ibrahim, Abd al-Fattah, 72–5, 218.
 Ibrahim, Yusuf Izz ad-Din, 93, 113, 119.
 Ikha' al-Watani (National Brotherhood) Party, 31, 37–8; in power, 39–40, 56–70; and tribal rebellions, 51–5.
 Inverchapel, Lord, 87–8, 236–7.
 Iran, *see* Persia.
 Isma'il, Abd al-Qadir, 66, 75, 85, 119, 121, 273.
Istiqlal, al- (newspaper), 97 n., 101, 102, 111, 166.
 Istiqlal (Independence) Party, 112, 119, 217, 218, 268, 272.
 Italy, 162, 165, 194, 195, 201, 250, 251; *see also* Axis Powers; Mussolini.
 Ittihad ad-Dasturi (Constitutional Union) Party, 219.
 Ittihad al-Watani (National Union) Party, 218.
- Jabr, Salih, 49, 93, 116–17, 118–19, 262; Prime Minister (1947–8), 268–72.
 Jamil, Husayn, al-, 218.
 Jamil, Jamal, 108.
 Japan, 165, 194, 250, 251.
 Jawad, Muhammad Ali, 84, 89 n., 108, 122, 124.
 Jawdat, Ali, 44, 48, 56, 64, 154, 176; Prime Minister (1934–5), 49–53; and Anglo-Arab co-operation, 225; Minister to U.S., 249.
 Jawa'wal Society, 159.
 Jewish deputies, 23, 221; anti-Jewish demonstration, 203–4.
 Jews, Palestine, 253; *see also* Zionism.
Jihad, proclamation of, 192, 194.
 Jordan, *see* Transjordan.
 Judicial system, *see* Law.
- Kabir, Yusuf, al-, 105.
 Kamal, Ibrahim, 135, 144, 146, 214.
 Kamil, Abd al-Hadi, 136.
 Kerr, Sir Archibald Clark, *see* Inverchapel, Lord.
 Khalid, Jalal, 202.
 Khawwam, Shaykh, 58–9, 64.
- Khorshid, Muhammad, 122.
 Khoshawi, Khalil, 63.
 Kirkuk, strike, 267, 274–5.
 Knabenshue, Paul, 167.
 Kubbah, Muhammad Mahdi, 217.
 Kuwayt, relations with, 138.
 Kurds, 62, 63, 108–9; Barzani rebellion, 63.
- Land policy, 116–17.
 Law, 26–8.
 League of Nations, 2, 79, 190, 225; Iraq membership of, 1, 6, 25, 227; Iraq mandate, 13–14, 16, 33–4, 226, 230–5; and Iraqi-Persian boundary dispute, 240–6; and Sa'dabad Pact, 247; and Arab League, 257, 258.
 Lebanon, 252, 254–7; *see also* France.
- Mahdi, Abbas, 119.
 Mahmud, Abd al-Wahhab, 135 n., 207, 213, 217.
 Mahmud, Ali, 111–12, 119, 123 n., 181.
 Mahmud, Muhammad Ali, 119, 128.
 Mandate, *see* League of Nations, Iraq mandate.
 Manna', Zamil, al-, 176.
 Mansur, George, 273–4.
 Mardam, Jamil, 255.
 Middle East, 33–5, 126, 157, 195.
 Middle East Pact (1945–7), abortive, 261–3.
 Midfa'i, Jamil, al-, 61, 66, 85, 86, 182, 207; Prime Minister (1933–4), 48–9, 54–5; (1937–8), 125–6, 127–33, 204–5, 249; (1941), 204, 205; and Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 173–4.
 Monarchical system, 19–21.
 Monck-Mason, G. E. A. C. (British Consul at Mosul), 139–40.
 Mufti of Jerusalem, *see* Husayni, Haj Amin, al-
 Muhammarah, treaty of, 238, 242.
 Mumtaz, Ali, 102.
 Mussolini, 197–8, 246, 248.
 Muthanna Club, 110, 133, 148, 159, 160, 185, 186, 217.
- Nahhas Pasha, Mustafa, 253, 254.
 Najib, Sabih, 131–2, 144, 145, 146.
 National Democratic Party, 217, 218, 268.
- National Union Party, 218.
 Nationalism, 2–5, 12, 67, 73, 110–12, 119–20, 156–61, 233–4, 251.
 Nazmi, Umar, 207, 214.
 Newcombe, Col. S. F., 170.
 Newton, Sir Basil, 163–5, 166, 167.

- Nuri as-Sa'id, General, 37, 56, 68–9, 182, 200, 224; and Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 6, 31, 227; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 39, 48, 56, 162–3, 164, 166, 170–2, 174–5; Prime Minister (1931–2), 62, 233; (1938–40), 133–52; (1941–4), 205; and Bakr Sidqi coup d'état, 129–30, 132; and Rashid Ali revolt, 169–70, 281–5; and Draft Amendment Law, 211–14; and Ittihad ad-Dasturi Party, 218–19; and Electoral Law, 219–20, 222; and Iraqi-Persian boundary, 241–3, 245–6; and Anglo-Iraqi co-operation, 249, 250; and Arab unity, 252–3, 255; and Turkish treaty, 261–2, 263; and Communism, 273.
- Nuri, General Abd al-Latif, 76, 90; and Bakr Sidqi coup d'état, 83, 86; Minister of Defence, 93, 94, 106, 108.
- Organic Law, *see* Constitution.
- Ottoman Empire, 1, 2–3, 11–12, 25, 240–5.
- Pachachi, Hamdi, 146, 264–5.
- Pachachi, Muzahim, 272.
- Palestine, 112, 134, 157, 159, 224; and Anglo-Iraqi relations, 200; Palestine War (1948–9), 218, 272, 276; and Arab League, 252, 254, 255–6, 259; *see also* Jews, Palestine, Zionism.
- Pan-Arabism, *see* Nationalism.
- Papen, von, 163, 193, 195.
- Parliament, 20–4.
- Persia, 76, 80, 98, 141, 224, 225; Iraqi-Persian boundary dispute, 240–6; and Sa'dabad Pact, 247–8; and Second World War, 249.
- Political Parties, 30–1, 217–19; *see also* Ahd; Communism; Ikha' al-Watani; Istiqlal; Ittihad ad-Dasturi; Ittihad al-Watani; Sha'b; Taqaddum; Watani.
- Popular Reform Society, 113, 120.
- Portsmouth, Treaty of, 268–72.
- Qadhi, Nuri, al-, 207.
- Qaftan, Arif, 111.
- Qassab, Abd al-Aziz, 272.
- Qawuqchi, Col. Fawzi, 110.
- Quinan, General, 249.
- Quwatli, Shukri, 254.
- Rajihad, Princess, 139.
- Rashid Ali, 3, 50, 51, 56, 81, 128–9, 134, 142 n., 151, 225; Prime Minister (1933), 39–40, 47–8; (1940–1), 154–77; (1941) 186–202; and tribal rebellions, 52–3, 61–2; Minister of Interior (1935–6), 56–90; deported, 100; chief of Royal *Diwan*, 133; coups d'état, 153–5, 174–8, 180–7; British attitude to, 187–90; revolt against Britain, 190–202.
- Russia, 194, 218, 248, 262, 273; and Iraqi-Persian boundary, 240, 242; and Azerbaijan, 265, 276; *see also* Communism.
- Sa'bawi, Yunis, as-, 176, 179, 180, 202, 205.
- Sabbagh, Col. Salah ad-Din, 130, 131, 132, 148, 179, 180, 181.
- Sa'dabad Pact, 141, 155, 162, 172, 225, 247–8, 261–3.
- Sa'di, Da'ud, 134–5.
- Sadr, Muhammad, as-, 61, 175, 177, 178, 272.
- Sa'dun, Abd al-Muhsin, 31, 227, 228.
- Safi, Senator Abd-Allah, 132.
- Sa'id, Col. Fahmi, 122, 180.
- Sa'id, General Nuri, *see* Nuri as-Sa'id.
- Saih, Sa'd, 217, 262, 266.
- Salman, Dr Hasan, as-, 186.
- Salman, Col. Mahmud, 130, 131, 148, 175, 180.
- Saudi Arabia, 98, 193, 253; King Abdul Aziz, 224, 238, 239; relations with Iraq, 225, 238–40; and Arab League, 254–5, 256, 257.
- Second World War, 140–4, 161–74, 187–205, 248–9; British forces in Iraq, 188–9; Iraqi declaration of war, 250–1; *see also* Anglo-Iraqi Treaty.
- Sha'b (People's) Party, 31, 218, 268.
- Shabandar, Musa, ash-, 186, 187.
- Shabib, Col. Kamil, 130, 131, 148, 179.
- Shabibi, Baqir, ash-, 67.
- Shabibi, Shaykh Muhammad Rida, 68, 105, 219, 221.
- Shabiyyah (populism), 72–4, 75.
- Shahbandar, Dr, 33.
- Shammas, Antoine, 207.
- Shansal, Siddiq, 166 n., 173 n.
- Shansul, Shaykh al-Hasan, 64.
- Sharaf, Sharif, 185–6.
- Shari'a, 27.
- Sharif, Aziz, 218.
- Shatt al-Arab, 182, 241–6.
- Shawi, Nazif, ash-, 130, 131, 221.
- Shawkat, Naji, 38, 40 n., 154; Minister of Interior, 48, 49; acting Prime Minister (1939), 134; Minister of Justice, 162–3, 164; and Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 170, 171; resignation, 174–5; Minister of Defence, 186, 193, 195.

- Shawkat, Sami, 160–1.
 Shevket, Mahmud Pasha, 75, 77, 137.
 Shi'is, 15, 37 n., 41 n., 49, 52–3, 54,
 55 n., 57.
 Shu'aybah, air base, 228, 270.
 Sidqi, General Bakr, 44, 80–2, 102,
 104, 273; and tribal rebellions, 59,
 64, 116–18; coup d'état, 75–6, 79,
 82–94; proposed statue of, 105–6;
 plans for dictatorship, 107–11; and
 Hikmat Sulayman cabinet, 93–126;
 assassination of, 120–3.
 Sulayman, Hikmat, 31, 44, 56, 70,
 76–8; Minister of Interior, 39, 48;
 and tribal rebellions, 52; and Ahali
 group, 65–6, 74; and Bakr Sidqi
 coup d'état, 75–6, 82–94; Prime
 Minister (1936–7), 93–126; alleged
 conspiracy, 135–7.
 Sunnis, 27, 37, 41, 52.
 Suwaydi, Naji, 37, 39, 66, 154, 174,
 175, 186.
 Suwaydi, Tawfiq, 154, 225; Foreign
 Minister, 181; and Draft Amend-
 ment Law, 207, 212; Prime Minister
 (1946), 217; and Electoral Law, 219,
 220, 221.
 Syria, 224, 260; and Abetz-Darlan
 agreement, 196–8; and Arab unity,
 252–3, 254, 255, 257; Franco-
 Syrian dispute, 258–9.
 Takarli, Abd al-Jabbar, 208.
 Talla'fari, Muhammad Ali, 122.
 Taqaddum (Progressive) Party, 31.
 Tawfiq, Husayn Fawzi, 145–6, 151.
 Tehran Protocol, 242, 244.
 Tikriti, Sa'id, 125, 126, 131.
 Transjordan, Iraq Regent in, 182, 200;
 and Arab unity, 252, 254, 257;
 relations with Iraq, 259–61, 268.
 Tribal shaykhs, 11; rebellions of, 51–5,
 57–64, 117–18; and land policy,
 116–17.
 Turkey, 3, 80, 81, 141, 260, 266; and
 Hikmat Sulayman, 77; and Iraqi-
 German relations, 162–3, 167–8;
 and Rashid Ali revolt, 193–4; and
 Second World War, 198, 162–3; and
 Sa'dabad Pact, 247–8; and Middle
 East Pact, 261–3; *see also* Ottoman
 Empire.
 Umari, General Amin, al-, 123–4, 125,
 126, 130, 131, 148, 149.
 Umari, Arshad, al- 202, 266 n., 267–8.
 Umari, Mustafa, al-, 207, 219, 265 n.
 United Nations, 2, 17 n., 250, 251, 264,
 270.
 United States, 167–8, 171, 191, 198–9,
 249.
 U.S.S.R., *see* Russia.
 Uzri, Abd al-Karim, 221.
 Wadi, Shakir, al-, 124.
 Washhash Camp, 125, 149.
 Watani (National) Party, 31, 40, 48, 74,
 Watani al-Democrat (National Demo-
 cratic) Party, 217–18, 268.
 Yaman, 160, 239; treaty with Iraq, 225,
 240; and Arab unity, 253, 254, 257;
 and Alexandria Protocol, 256.
 Yamulki, Col. Aziz, 122, 123 n., 130,
 131, 132, 148, 149 n.
 Yasin, Shaykh Yusuf, 239.
 Yasiri, Alwan, al-, 53, 116, 117 n.,
 185, 186.
 Yazidis, 63–4.
 Yusuf, Salman Yusuf, *see* Fahd.
 Zaki, General Amin, 177, 180, 181,
 182.
 Zaki, Muhammad, 31, 48, 61, 69, 219.
 Zaki, Muhammad Amin, 56, 162, 164.
 Zaynal, Hamdi, 123.
 Zionism, 112, 138, 157, 255, 259.

PRINTED IN
GREAT BRITAIN
AT THE
UNIVERSITY PRESS
OXFORD
BY
CHARLES BATEY
PRINTER
TO THE
UNIVERSITY

